FOREIGN
BROADCAST
INFORMATION
SERVICE

Daily Report

LAST ISSUE

THE *NEAR EAST & SOUTH ASIA DAILY REPORT*
VILL NOT BE AVAILABLE AS A PAPER BOOK AFTER **16 AUGUST**
TO ARRANGE FOR ELECTRONIC RECEIPT, PLEASE SEE INSIDE
FOR INFORMATION ON VARIOUS OPTIONS

LAST ISSUE

Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-160
Friday
16 August 1996

Dear Customer:

Responding to our many customers' requests, NTIS is offering FBIS publications electronically. Due to resource limitations, hardcopy production of FBIS publications will be phased out during 1996. Hardcopy reports which have already been discontinued include *Arms Control & Proliferation Issues, Environment & World Health, Narcotics, and Terrorism.*

Hardcopy publication of the regional DAILY REPORTS will cease as follows:

1 August	*China, Latin America*
19 August	*Near East and South Asia, West Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, West Europe Economic Review*
2 September	*East Asia, East Europe, East Europe Economic Review*
16 September	*Central Eurasia, Central Eurasia Military Affairs, Central Eurasia Economic Review*

FBIS' goal is to cease publication of all hardcopy reports by 31 December 1996 except for S&T PERSPECTIVES, S&T CENTRAL EURASIA, S&T CHINA, S&T KOREA, S&T EUROPE, and S&T JAPAN. The S&T reports will continue to be published as hardcopy until the graphics they contain can be disseminated on-line.

FBIS products are offered electronically through the National Technical Information Service's (NTIS) "World News Connection" (WNC). This is a new on-line subscription service accessible through the World Wide Web. The Web address is http://wnc.fedworld.gov. Please see the next page for a subscription form or call NTIS Fax Direct at 703-487-4140 and enter product code 8645 to receive more information.

World News Connection™

A Foreign News Alert Service
from
the U.S. Government

World News Connection - WNC1……………………**$ 21**
7 Day - Introductory Offer
Unlimited interactive searching
[no profiles]
Order number SUB-9856BDQ

World News Connection - WNC2……………………**$ 50**
Monthly
Unlimited interactive searching
[no profiles]
Order number PB95-985700BDQ

World News Connection - WNC3……………………**$ 75**
Monthly
Unlimited interactive searching
[1 profile]
Order number PB95-985800BDQ

World News Connection - WNC4……………………**$100**
Monthly
Unlimited interactive searching
[up to 5 profiles]
Order number PB95-985900BDQ
(Prices are subject to change)

	User Name *(Please Print or Type)*	Internet E-mail Address *(Required)*	Order Number	Price
1)				
2)				

(Continue on a blank sheet if more space is required)

Deposit Account Number (for NTIS account customers only):

Customer Master Number (if known): Date:

Contact Name: Organization:

Street Address: City: State: Zip:

Province/Territory: Country:

Foreign Postal Code:

Internet E-mail Address (Organization contact person):

Telephone Number: ( ) Fax Number: ( )

Credit Card Number:

Credit Card Expiration Date:

Card Type (Visa, Master Card, or American Express):

Cardholder's Name (as printed on the credit card):

Cardholder's Signature (required to validate all orders):

(Please fax this form back to NTIS at **703-321-8547**. Fax service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
To verify receipt of your fax, call (703) 487-4679 between 7:00am - 5:00pm, Monday - Friday, Eastern Time.)

Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-160 CONTENTS *16 August 1996*

NOTICE: An * indicates material that may not be disseminated in electronic form.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: 'AQIDATI 6 Aug 1
Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 6 Aug 2

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: Officials Denounce Israeli Plans in Jerusalem *[Jericho VOP]* 6
Palestinian Affairs: Israel Said 'Crippling' Gaza Airport Operation *[Jericho VOP]* 6
Palestinian Affairs: Palestinian-Israeli Committee Discusses Gaza Airport *[Jericho VOP]* 6
Palestinian Affairs: Security, Technical Committees Formed on Gaza Airport *[Jericho VOP]* . 6
Palestinian Affairs: Islamic Jihad Movement Denounces Settlement Activity *[Gaza TV]* 7
Palestinian Affairs: Aide 'Angrily' Denies Reported 'Arafat Assassination Bid *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 16 Aug]* 7
Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Calls on Palestinians To Rise Up Against Settlements *[AFP]* 7
Palestinian Affairs: Al-Rujub, Jordanian Aide Cited on Arms Smuggling *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 16 Aug]* 8

ARAB AFRICA

Algeria

Algeria: Security Forces Neutralize 1300 Islamists *[Paris Radio]* 9

Egypt

Egypt: Yemeni President Phones Mubarak on Hanish Islands *[MENA]* 9
Egypt: Mubarak Reportedly Warned U.S. Against Attacking Libya *[AL-SHA'B 6 Aug]* 9
Egypt: Diplomatic Source Says Egypt Not To Sign Chemical Weapons Treaty *[MENA]* 10
Egypt: Newspapers Warn of Consequences of Israeli 'Inflexibility' *[MENA]* 10
Egypt: AL-AKHBAR Views U.S. Stand on Turkish-Iranian Accord *[MENA]* 10

Libya

Libya: Al-Qadhdhafi Reportedly Suffers Heart Attack *[Rome LA REPUBLICA 14 Aug]* 11
Libya: Cairo Embassy 'Spokeswoman' Denies Clashes in East *[Paris Radio Monte Carlo]* 12
Libya: Militant Islamic Group Lists Casualties in Recent Clashes *[London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI 15 Aug]* 12
Libya: Islamic Martyrs Movement Claims Military Operations *[London AL-HAYAH 16 Aug]* . 13
Libya: Diplomats Say 2,000 Immigrants Escape From Tripoli Prison *[AFP]* 13

Sudan

Sudan: MENA Says 38 Officers Arrested in Failed Coup Attempt 13
Sudan: Opposition Spokesman Denies Reports of Attempted Coup *[London AL-HAYAH 16 Aug]* 14
Sudan: First Vice President Urges Garang To Join Peace Process *[SUNA]* 14

ARABIAN PENINSULA

Kuwait

Kuwait: Information Minister Interviewed on Terrorism, Iraq *[MENA]* 15

Kuwait: Information Minister Previews Heir's Tour *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 15 Aug]* 15

Yemen

Yemen: Yemeni Forces Recapture Lesser Hanish Island *[MENA]* 16
Yemen: President, UN Secretary General Discuss Eritrean 'Aggression' on Island *[Sanaa TV]* 16
Yemen: 'Sources' Say Eritrean Troops Still on Disputed Island *[Paris Radio Monte Carlo]* 17

IRAQ

Iraq: Reservists Reportedly Called Up Due to Regional Tension *[AL-HAQIQAH 15 Aug]* 18
Iraq: Transport Minister Says Preparations Completed at al-Basrah Ports *[INA]* 18
Iraq: Baghdad Proposes New Road to Turkey To Avoid Kurdish Areas *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 15 Aug]* 18

ISRAEL

Israel: Mordekhay Proposes Dual-Track Negotiations With Syrians *[Tel Aviv Radio]* 19
Israel: Netanyahu Will Not Recognize Unsigned Understanding With Syria *[HA'ARETZ 16 Aug]* 19
Israel: IDF To Formulate 'Active Operational Concept' in Lebanon *[HA'ARETZ 16 Aug]* 20
Israel: Complaint Lodged With Monitoring Group; UNIFIL on Situation *[Jerusalem Radio]* 20
Israel: Delegation Head Satisfied With ILMG Reaction to Complaint *[Jerusalem Radio]* 21
Israel: Netanyahu, Ministers Discuss Hebron, Postpone Decision *[MA'ARIV 16 Aug]* 21
Israel: Al-Rujub's Service Said Behind Jordanian Weapon Smuggling *[THE JERUSALEM POST 16 Aug]* 22

JORDAN

Jordan: Turkish Justice Minister Says Permit Not Needed To Start Trade With Iraq *[Ankara TV]* 24

SYRIA

Syria: Israeli Settlement Drive 'Stabs' Peace Process in 'Heart' *[Damascus Radio]* 25
Syria: AL-BA'TH Lashes at U.S. 'Terrorist' Policy, D'Amato Law *[SANA]* 25

SOUTH ASIA

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Rabbani Congratulates Pakistan on Independence Day *[Kabul Radio]* 27
Afghanistan: Foreign Ministry Agrees To Meeting With Russia, Tajikistan *[Mashhad International]* 27
Afghanistan: IRNA—Taleban Attack in Southeast Repelled *[IRNA]* 27
Afghanistan: Taleban Group Joins Government Forces in Vardak Province *[Kabul Radio]* 28

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: Prime Minister Starts Crackdown on 1975 Coup Leaders *[AFP]* 28
Bangladesh: Home Minister Confirms Plot Against Government *[AFP]* 29
Bangladesh: Suicide Squad To Assassinate Prime Minister Arrested *[AFP]* 29
Bangladesh: Sub-Continental Tensions Viewed *[JANAKANTHA 7 Aug]* 29

India

India: Iranian Support Over CTBT Seen as Possible 'Liability' *[THE TELEGRAPH 14 Aug]* 30
India: Need For India To Declare Nuclear Status Viewed *[THE HINDUSTAN TIMES 14 Aug]* 31
India: Article on 'Second Best Option' for CTBT *[THE HINDU 14 Aug]* 32

India: Article Propounds 'Valid Reasons' for Nuclear Testing *[DAINIK JAGRAN 13 Aug]* 34
India: Article Views Country's Ties With ASEAN *[THE HINDU 10 Aug]* 35
India: Influx of Tamil Refugees From Sri Lanka Continues *[Delhi Radio]* 37
India: Directive To Ensure Impartial Conduct of Polls in Kashmir *[Delhi Radio]* 37
India: Army Foils Plot To Disrupt Election Process in Kashmir *[Delhi Radio]* 37
India: Pakistan-Trained Militants Surrender in Kashmir *[Delhi Radio]* 38
India: Article Notes Efforts To Rejuvenate Congress in Karnataka *[DECCAN HERALD 13 Aug]* 38
India: FIPC Seeks To Accelerate, Increase, Direct, FDI Flow *[THE HINDU 13 Aug]* 39
India: Import Duty on Small Power Plant Equipment Reduced *[THE ECONOMIC TIMES 13 Aug]* 40

Iran

Iran: Reaction To Bob Dole's Republican Nomination *[Tehran International]* 41
Iran: Majles Speaker Says Negotiations With U.S. Will 'Solve Nothing' *[IRNA]* 41
Iran: Foreign Ministry Spokesman Interviewed on U.S. Aims *[TEHRAN TIMES 11 Aug]* 42
Iran: IRGC Commander Comments on Readiness To Counter U.S. Attack *[TEHRAN TIMES 11 Aug]* 42
Iran: Washington's 'Inimical Propaganda' on Iran Decried *[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI 6 Aug]* ... 43
Iran: Commentary Says U.S. Using Afghan Crisis To Increase Presence *[Tehran International]* 44
Iran: RESALAT Warns U.S. 'Limited Blow' May Bring 'Unlimited Blows' *[RESALAT 8 Aug]* 44
Iran: Daily Says Sanctions To Secure Zionist Votes for Clinton *[IRAN NEWS 12 Aug]* 45
Iran: Tehran To Respect Final Nuclear Test Ban Document *[Tehran Radio]* 46
Iran: Envoy Says U.S. Plays 'Rogue Midwife' Role at Geneva Talks *[Tehran TV]* 46
Iran: Envoy Notes Expanding Relations With China *[IRNA]* 46
Iran: Commentary on Hamas Opposition to More Jewish Settlements *[Tehran Inetrnational]* . 47
Iran: Foreign Minister Velayati Says Iran Seeks Good Ties With Arab World *[IRNA]* 47
Egypt: Tehran Urges Egypt To Distance Itself From Israel *[Tehran Radio]* 47
Iran: Official on Setting Up Common Market With Azerbaijan *[IRNA]* 48
Iran: Libyan Envoy Criticizes U.S. Legislation *[IRNA]* 48
Iran: Petroleum Minister Describes Oil Deal With Kazakhstan *[Tehran TV]* 48
Iran: Afghan Government Forces, Dostam Cease-Fire Called 'Step Forward' *[Tehran Radio]* 49
Iran: Syria's Middle East Policy Analyzed *[SALAM 4 Aug]* 49
Iran: Energy Minister Discusses Technical Cooperation With Syria *[IRNA]* 51
Iran: Turkish President's Call for Summit With Iran, Iraq, Syria Lauded *[TEHRAN TIMES 12 Aug]* 51
Iran: Ayatollah Kashani Delivers Friday Prayers 16 Aug *[Tehran Radio]* 52
Iran: Reyshahri Nominated for Presidential Elections *[IRAN NEWS 11 Aug]* 53
Iran: Velayati Addresses Diplomats, States Right To Defend Islam *[IRNA]* 53
Iran: Majles Speaker Stresses Unified Foreign Policy to Envoys *[Tehran Radio]* 53
Iran: Rafsanjani Visits Fars Province Armed Forces *[RESALAT 5 May]* 54
Iran: Commander Says Ground Forces in 'Best' State of Preparedness *[Tehran Radio]* 55
Iran: Basiji Forces Set Up Training Camp To Demonstrate Power *[Tehran TV]* 55
Iran: Reports on Iran's Development of Nuclear Energy Denounced *[Tehran International]* ... 56
Iran: Industrial Products Worth $750 Million Exported Last Year *[IRNA]* 56
Iran: Chalus-Tehran Highway Studies Begin *[RESALAT 24 Apr]* 56

Nepal & Bhutan

Nepal: Parliamentary Party Meetings Discuss Mechi Border Issue *[THE KATHMANDU POST 11 Aug]* 57
Nepal: Daily Views Indian Stand on CTBT *[THE KATHMANDU POST 14 Aug]* 57

Pakistan

Pakistan: U.S. State Department — 'No Change' in U.S. Kashmir Policy *[THE NATION 11 Aug]* 58

Pakistan: Article Criticizes Wisner Statement on Kashmir *[THE NATION 13 Aug]* 59
Pakistan: Bid to Delete Kashmir, Palestine From UN Agenda Foiled *[Islamabad Radio]* 60
Pakistan: Main Kashmir Leaders Arrested in Delhi; Black Day Observed *[Islamabad TV]* 61
Pakistan: Turkey's Erbakan on Ties With Muslim Countries, U.S., Iran *[Ankara TV]* 61
Pakistan: Text of Pakistani-Afghan Communique *[Kabul Radio]* 62
Pakistan: Sharif Announces Next Phase of Opposition Movement *[THE NEWS 14 Aug]* 63
Pakistan: Leaders Take 'Serious Notice' of Strike *[THE NEWS 12 Aug]* 64
Pakistan: Modernization of Tax System Discussed *[THE NATION 11 Aug]* 65

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Deputy Minister—Operation Against LTTE 'Will Continue' *[Colombo International]* 67
Sri Lanka: Tamil Tigers Bomb South Korean Project Office, Hijack Food *[AFP]* 68
Sri Lanka: LTTE Report Blames Colombo for Temple Bombing *[Tamil Eelam News WWW]* 69
Sri Lanka: LTTE Plot To Send Refugees to India Uncovered *[Colombo International]* 69
Sri Lanka: Police Kill 2 LTTE Bombers Suspects in Kalmunai *[DAILY NEWS 16 Aug]* 70
Sri Lanka: Three LTTE Terrorists Arrested by Indian Coast Guard *[Colombo International]* .. 70
Sri Lanka: Opposition, Amnesty International's Critique of PA Viewed *[DAILY NEWS 16 Aug]* 71

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: 'AQIDATI 6 Aug

NC1508200896

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 6 August edition of the Cairo Arabic language newspaper 'AQIDATI that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Grand Imam Denies al-Fatwa Committee Will Be Dissolved
2. Court of Cassation Rejects Three Appeals by Nasr Abu-Zayd
3. Al-Azhar University Sends Islamic Books to Leiden University
4. Investigation Reveals Problems of Preachers, Imams in al-Fayyum
5. Al-Fatwa Committee Answers Queries on Female Circumcision, Others
6. Mufti's Office Answers Questions From Readers on Sale of Alcohol
7. Professor Discusses Motives Behind Calls for Religious Dialogue
8. Writer Warns That If Israel Hampers Peace, It Will Face Terrorism
9. Columnist Says 'Backwardness' Not Destiny of Islamic Nations

GRAND IMAM DENIES AL-FATWA COMMITTEE WILL BE DISSOLVED

On page three is published a 300-word report by Musa Hal on statements by Grand Imam Shaykh Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi in which he says that the al-Azhar Fatwa Committee and its related committees in the governorates will not be dissolved. He says: "There are no intentions to dissolve the committee." He denies that some members of the committee have resigned. He notes, however, that "the official side responsible for fatwas in Egypt is the Mufti's Office [dar al-ifta']." He also denies that the al-Azhar Counsel Department has been placed under the jurisdiction of the Awqaf Ministry.

COURT OF CASSATION REJECTS THREE APPEALS BY NASR ABU-ZAYD

A 150-word report is carried on page two on the Court of Cassation's rejection of the three appeals Nasr Abu-Zayd and his wife Ibtihal Yunus submitted to the Court against the verdict that stipulates Abu-Zayd should divorce his wife. Counsellor Muhammad Samidah, the person who filed the case against Abu-Zayd, made a statement after the ruling saying they want "to set an example for every secularist in Egypt to wake up." He said the man was dangerous because he was a teacher imparting such atheist ideas to his students and had to be removed from that position, but the only way to do so was through making him divorce his wife.

AL-AZHAR UNIVERSITY SENDS ISLAMIC BOOKS TO LEIDEN UNIVERSITY

A 50-word report on page two says that al-Azhar University has presented a number of distinguished Islamic books and research on jurisprudence to the Islamic cultural center at Leiden University in the Netherlands "to clarify Islamic viewpoints regarding various issues."

INVESTIGATION REVEALS PROBLEMS OF PREACHERS, IMAMS IN AL-FAYYUM

Page three carries a 1500-word investigative report by Mahmud 'Ushb and Muhammad al-Full on the opinions of imams and preachers in al-Fayyum on the nature of the problems hampering the Islamic call and the things the preachers suffer from. The two reporters find that the preachers' problems consist of "housing, communication, lack of material incentives, and absence of religious libraries." The preachers and imams proposed that their work should be "optional, not by appointment." They also asked to have a union expressing their opinion and uniting them. The rest of the investigative report quotes various imams and preachers on these issues. Some of the issues they raise are that the imams are weak in Arabic, have inadequate knowledge of religious matters, lack funds and resources, and other matters.

AL-FATWA COMMITTEE ANSWERS QUERIES ON FEMALE CIRCUMCISION, OTHERS

Page four publishes a 3000-word question and answer discussion with al-Azhar's Fatwa Committee members on various subjects, this week featuring the legitimacy of female circumcision. Shaykh 'Atiyyah Saqr answers by first noting that the origins of female circumcision are not known, but are believed to be Jewish or pre-Islamic. He then reviews the differences in opinion among ulemas regarding this issue. Shaykh Saqr concludes: "Truly, when in moderation, it is a method of cleanliness from which both men and women benefit. There is no truth in what some circles claim that it causes health or social problems. Hundreds of years have gone by and the Muslims have been practicing this without any problems." Other topics discussed are whether Islam is a global religion or not, to which the answer is yes. It should not be restricted to Arabs only, as is generally the case. Another reader asks a question on whether a homosexual person is a Muslim or a heretic, to which the answer is crystal clear through the Prophet's words. He said: "If you see homosexuality, you should kill all those involved in it."

MUFTI'S OFFICE ANSWERS QUESTIONS FROM READERS ON SALE OF ALCOHOL

Also published on page five is a 250-word report on questions put to the Mufti's Office on various issues answered by shaykhs and imams. Some issues relate to the sale of alcohol by a Muslim in Italy, and the answer given is that he should stop selling alcohol because it is forbidden in Islam. Another matter raised by a 15 year old girl, is what the legal age for wearing the headscarf is. The answer is that girls should wear the headscarf when they reach puberty.

PROFESSOR DISCUSSES MOTIVES BEHIND CALLS FOR RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

Page six features a 2500-word article by 'Abd-al-Fattah Ahmad al-Fawi, a professor of philosophy at Cairo University, on dialogue among religions. He notes that this is a new tune that is being played these days and calls on readers to "look into what people want from their application of this motto." He says: "They want nothing more than making Muslims abandon some religious principles that the West believes contradict human rights. So in light of this dialogue it is alright, or in fact the Muslims must make women equal to men in inheritance, allow Muslim women to marry non-Muslim men, allow free sexual relations, sanction abortion, and ban bigamy but allow having numerous girlfriends." Also, he notes that female circumcision should be banned, and all sorts of other issues of principle should be abandoned.

The writer discusses the tolerance of Islam in detail and gives examples from history where Muslim states allowed non-Muslims to live freely and equally with Muslims. He gives the example of Andalusia. He concludes: "Despite all of this, we do not reject the call for dialogue and rapprochement and are not opposed to it." He says all the Muslims want is to be treated the same way they treat others.

WRITER WARNS THAT IF ISRAEL HAMPERS PEACE, IT WILL FACE TERRORISM

Majdi Salim's 400-word "Our God Is Generous" column on page 10 is entitled "Mubarak's Message to the United States and Israel." He opens his column by expressing surprise at the unlimited backing Israel gets from Europe and the United States at a time when it clearly reveals through its behavior and statements that it is a racist state. The West treats Israel like a spoiled child, none of whose demands are ever rejected.

He notes that despite all of this, we still rejoice over every small statement that emerges from Israel promising optimism. He notes that there are reasons for being optimistic though, in the "inherent and intelligent threat President Husni Mubarak announced during his visit to the United States on the possibilities of the failure of the third international economic conference if Israel does not take clear steps toward peace with Syria and the Palestinians. The message in Mubarak's statement is clear to Israel: "If you insist on continuing your plans, everything will change; there will not be peace between the Arabs and Israel." The writer warns that Israel will have to confront Arab solidarity, "something you fear a great deal." And something else Israel fears is terrorism, which it will have to face much of, the writer forewarns.

COLUMNIST SAYS 'BACKWARDNESS' NOT DESTINY OF ISLAMIC NATIONS

In his 300-word "A Call To Reason" column on the back page, Al-Sayyid 'Abd-al-Ra'uf discusses economic development in Islamic countries. After reviewing the great economic leaps Japan has made, he notes that Malaysia, followed by Indonesia, both of which are Islamic countries, suddenly joined the Asian Tigers group as one of the fastest developing countries. He concludes that these examples, along with Egypt, prove that "backwardness is not a destiny that is ordained and imposed on Islamic nations and that potentials in every Islamic country, such as resources and manpower, if exploited properly are enough to steer these countries toward development."

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 6 Aug

NC1608090296

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 6 August edition of the Cairo Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Chief Editor Searched; His Departure Delayed.
2. Rights Group Criticizes Government's Violations.
3. Minister's Family Accused of Breaking Law.
4. Editor Says Parliament Dissolution Necessity.
5. Mubarak Warns U.S. Against Attacking Libya.
6. Iraq's Exclusion From Islamic Conference Criticized.
7. Writer Views Egyptian-U.S. Ties.
8. Brotherhood Figure Views Zionist Plan, U.S. Protection.

9. New Police Academy Plan Said Costly.
10. Opposition Rally Calls For United Front.
11. London-Based Group Demands Dissolution of Parliament.
12. Egyptian-U.S. Council Deplores Military Trial.
13. Writer Says Prime Minister's Powers Incomplete.

CHIEF EDITOR SEARCHED; HIS DEPARTURE DELAYED

An unattributed 50-word report on page 1 says that the departure of Chief Editor Majdi Husayn for Lebanon on 5 August was delayed. A group of officers, waiting for him at the Cairo Airport gate, "searched him thoroughly" before letting him catch his flight. The measure, the report adds, caused "confusion" at the airport. No reason for the search was given.

RIGHTS GROUP CRITICIZES GOVERNMENT'S VIOLATIONS

An approximately 400-word report on pages 1 and 8 cites a statement by the Egyptian Human Rights Organization blaming the government's failure to investigate human rights violations as the reason for its "condemnation" by a UN anti-torture committee. The report notes that the government has refused to receive two of the UN committee members who wanted to investigate the torture charges, despite the committee's assurances that the visit's goal was not to condemn the government but to ascertain if torture was taking place on a regular basis. The committee report concluded that torture was practiced "regularly" by Egyptian security men, despite the government's denials, adding that the torture claims presented by "reliable" non-governmental organizations show torture to be both a "wide-spread" and "routine" practice in at least a "large" part of the state. In its statement, the Egyptian organization made 18 demands from the state, including the cancellation of the president's authority to set up special prisons and to determine the terms of detention and release, as well as more supervision of prisons and detention centers by the prosecution.

MINISTER'S FAMILY ACCUSED OF BREAKING LAW

An approximately 700-word unattributed report on page 1 accuses Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi's family of "breaking the law" that defines the terms of purchase of building plots in al-Shuruq City. The report notes that on 10 March 1994 "six members of the interior minister's family", including his sons, daughter, and daughters-in-law, paid the downpayments for 7 plots in that city in violation of the law, which prohibits members of the same household from buying more than one plot in new urban cities. The report cites a statement by Engineer Mahmud al-Sirinjawi, deputy chairman of the Urban Communities Authority—to AL-AHRAM on 30 June 1996—in which he complained of violations of the rule organizing the sale of plots to members of the same family. He notes that whenever investigations prove any violation, the extra plots held in violation of the law are immediately taken away from the violator. Noting that the market price of the land is now over "ten times as much" as at the time of making the downpayment, the paper calls on officials to take away the extra plots from the minister's family. Concluding, the paper notes that although the minister is "breaking the law" openly, he is "beyond" reproach. Instead, the report adds, "we are being put on trial" and not the minister.

EDITOR SAYS PARLIAMENT DISSOLUTION NECESSITY

Chief Editor Majdi Ahmad Husayn demands the dissolution of the People's Assembly in an approximately 400-word article on page 2. He notes that following the "historic" State Council ruling condemning the Interior Ministry for refusing to implement judicial verdicts suspending election results and rejecting run-offs in a large number of constituencies. Husayn notes that now that the Court of Cessation has passed more than 200 verdicts annulling elections in these constituencies, the "dissolution of the People's Assembly" has become a "necessity" to straighten things out in the country. Husayn adds that the government's failure to comply with the recent judicial verdicts will be like a death sentence to the "Judicial Authority", because it will turn its verdicts into mere "ink on paper." Referring to the "improvement" in the official policy in terms of the regime's awareness of the risks of "subservience to the United States and the dangers of the Israeli domination of Egypt and the region", Husayn notes that the atmosphere is now favorable to correct this serious mistake that divided the ranks of the nation and led people to give up any hope of "reform" by peaceful and constitutional means. Otherwise, he adds, the country will face a dead end and fail to stand up to external challenges.

MUBARAK WARNS U.S. AGAINST ATTACKING LIBYA

A 633-word report by Mahmud Bakri on pages 1 and 8 says that President Mubarak has cautioned the United States against attacking Libya.

IRAQ'S EXCLUSION FROM ISLAMIC CONFERENCE CRITICIZED

Buthaynah al-Nasiri, in an approximately 600-word report on page 3, comments on the Islamic conference held in Cairo between 24 and 27 July, under the auspices of the Higher Council for Islamic Affairs. The writer notes that representatives from 71 countries attended the conference, excluding Iraq. When asked about the reasons for Iraq's absence, the Egyptian Awqaf Minister said that Iraq had not been invited so that the six Gulf states could attend the conference. While appreciating the minister's frankness, the writer notes that Saudi Arabia last year invited the Iraqi Minister of Awqaf to a meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Noting that the Gulf states did not object then to such invitation, the writer asks: "Do we understand from this that the Gulf states can dictate terms on Egypt and cannot do the same with Saudi Arabia? The conference's theme, the writer adds, dealt with the future of cultural dialogue. She asks: "What cultural dialogue could these Muslims discuss while ignoring the death thus far of one million Iraqi children because of the abominable embargo imposed by some of the countries invited by the conference to hold a cultural dialogue?" She notes that while calling for justice, tolerance, and positive coexistence among mankind, the conference ignored the plight of millions of Muslims in Iraq.

WRITER VIEWS EGYPTIAN-U.S. TIES

Labor Party official, Retired Major General Tal'at Musallam, comments on Egyptian-U.S. ties in an approximately 1,200-word article on page 2. He refers to the recent Egyptian Government press articles praising bilateral ties and noting the U.S. officials' tribute to Egypt's role. He notes that many senior Egyptian writers and officials have described the visits and talks held by "senior officials" to the United States as successful. He notes that a true "assessment" is supposed to depend on how successful these meetings were in serving Egyptian national goals. He notes that he and many other Egyptians do not feel "comfortable" with reports citing the U.S. "appreciation" for Egypt's role, adding that Egypt was a well-established state at a time when America did not even exist on the world map and its native Indian inhabitants were living a "primitive" life. Thus, he adds, Egypt does not need an "assessment" certificate from anybody. Noting that his own assessment of Egyptian-U.S. relations is governed by the impact these ties have on a number of issues about which no "genuine Arab" would disagree. He notes that Arabs are unanimous in expecting the United States to call on Israel to announce its intention to withdraw from the Golan, lift the siege of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, and give up its nuclear weapons. He notes that it is not enough for the United States to announce its adherence to the land-for-peace principle and its backing for the agreements signed between Israel and the Arab parties, for without taking actual measures this announcement leads nowhere. The writer goes on to say that on the domestic level "we demand the United States stop interfering in our internal affairs", stop calling for the liquidation of the Egyptian public sector, and drop its objection to the reelection of UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus-Ghali. Concluding, Musallam adds: "If we assess Egyptian-U.S. relations in light of the foregoing, we will surely say that the recent Egyptian-U.S. contacts have resulted in no significant gains, at least not for Egypt, while the U.S. leadership has tried and is trying to utilize these contacts for its own good in the coming presidential elections."

BROTHERHOOD FIGURE VIEWS ZIONIST PLAN, U.S. PROTECTION

Muslim Brotherhood spokesman Ma'mun al-Hudaybi, in an approximately 2,500-word article on page 5, notes that the convening of the Arab summit in Cairo after years of division was a step in the right direction, for it proved that the Arabs are capable or placing their interests above any other interests. The summit, he adds, came at a time when "Zionist arrogance" reached its peak and the "Zionists showed everybody the scope of their designs." He notes that while the Arabs were meeting in Cairo, Netanyahu "stuck his tongue out" at them and revealed his expansionist policy, which envisaged an undivided Jerusalem, control over the Golan, and more settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. He points out that U.S. President Clinton's remarks in his press conference with President Mubarak in Washington showed backing for Netanyahu's views, which is nothing new or surprising. He cites President Clinton's refusal to blame the Israeli Government for its new settlement policy, its stands vis-a-vis the peace process, and his view on the Jerusalem issue. He adds: "This means that the Arabs are facing more dangers and storms from the usurping Zionist entity, which is doing what it wants under the U.S. umbrella. Dangers and storms threaten the Arabs' destiny and very existence." Al-Hudaybi notes that experience shows that the solution must come from the Arabs, who took the first step by holding the summit in Cairo. As a counterplan, al-Hudaybi notes that the Arabs must mobilize their resources, prepare the nation for a "confrontation", and direct the media and sources of culture to play their correct role in mobilization and preparation.

NEW POLICE ACADEMY PLAN SAID COSTLY

Labor Party Deputy President Dr. Muhammad Hilmi Murad, in an approximately 1,000-word article on page 5, comments on the Interior Ministry's plan to build a new premises for the Policy Academy, on an approximately 2,200-feddan area approximately 25 km away from downtown Cairo. He notes that the existing Police Academy buildings in the al-'Abbasiyah district of Cairo could be expanded to meet the academy's demands and the funds allocated for building a new academy could be used to renovate old police buildings throughout the country, provide the necessary equipment for police personnel to carry out their job, and build homes for police officers with easy terms of payment. Murad says that he was shocked by the Interior Minister's remarks on the need to build a "huge" academy "regardless of the cost." The Interior Ministry's plan, he adds, is to build the "biggest security academy in the world, or the academy of the century" to include specialized research and training centers for specific countries, such as the CIS, South East Asia, and the Mediterranean countries. A hotel, a helicopter landing pad, a shooting arena, and an "Olympic" sports city will be part of the complex, he adds, noting that the buildings will follow the "pharaonic style", a costly design that could have been replaced with a less expensive, modern, and simple style.

In another article on the same page, Murad comments on the establishment of a company between Egyptian and Israeli businessmen to build an oil refinery in Alexandria. The capital of the company, totaling $1.2 billion, is divided as follows: 40 percent for Egyptian businessman Husayn Salim's group, 40 percent for the Israeli Group Merhav, and 20 percent for the Egyptian General Petroleum Corporation. The company, he adds, will be chaired by Salim, a former Egyptian intelligence officer. Murad notes that U.S. President Clinton blessed the project as the "first economic project demonstrating regional economic cooperation in the Middle East", something which Murad views as violation of the Cairo Arab summit's recommendations regarding normalization with Israel. Murad adds: "What is more serious, however, is that this huge enterprise will deplete Egypt's petroleum reserves" earlier than the projected 10-12 year period accorded in official statistics. He notes that the state's policy should be based on economizing on the available oil reserves so that these reserves may last as long as possible. He points out that under the Constitution, any "contractual obligation" for the supply of oil on the part of the state, represented in this agreement by the Egyptian General Petroleum Corporation, must be submitted to the People's Assembly for endorsement before becoming binding on the state.

OPPOSITION RALLY CALLS FOR UNITED FRONT

An unattributed 3,000-word report on page 6 reviews a meeting among representatives of the Egyptian opposition parties and "national forces" at the Labor Party office in Madinat al-Nasr on 2 August. During the rally, the opposition representatives stressed emphasized that a strong and united domestic front is the key to consolidating Arab unity and confronting the "Zionist-U.S. alliance." They strongly denounced the government's disregard for judicial verdicts annulling the People's Assembly elections. Speaking at the rally, Labor Party Secretary General 'Adil Husayn stressed that "Egypt's strength in the face of the Zionists" is not measured by the magnitude of weapons it possesses, because the "foreigners" who supply Egypt with weapons will always make sure that Israel remains superior to us. Our main source of strength, he adds, is that we are 200 million and they are 3.5 million; we can lose one million in fighting while they cannot lose 10,000. Turning to the government's failure to implement the judicial verdict on the elections, Husayn says: "What concerns me in the first place is how a respectable country could accept such a situation?" He calls on the political leadership to adopt a clear stance vis-a-vis what he termed a "political crisis unheard of in any other country."

LONDON-BASED GROUP DEMANDS DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT

An unattributed 100-word report on page 8 cites a statement by the London-based Egyptian Action Group calling on the government to comply with judicial rulings annulling elections in some constituencies and dissolve the People's Assembly. The group notes that the government's failure to implement these rulings constitutes a flagrant violation that could result in chaos and lack of trust in the law.

EGYPTIAN-U.S. COUNCIL DEPLORES MILITARY TRIAL

An approximately 200-word report by Kamal Habib on page 8 says that the "Egyptian-U.S. Council has condemned the ongoing military trial of 13 founders of Al-Wasat Party." In a statement released in Washington, the council called for suspending these type of trials immediately and releasing all political prisoners, adding that the trial is a political trial of civilians before a military tribunal. The statement notes that the defendants on trial belong to highly respectable categories of society, including university professors, thinkers, and researchers.

WRITER SAYS PRIME MINISTER'S POWERS INCOMPLETE

Muhammad 'Abd-al-Quddus, in his regular column on page 10, praises Prime Minister Kamal al-Janzuri as one of the "most efficient" premiers to serve under President Mubarak. However, he notes that "grave mistakes" were committee under the nose of al-Janzuri because his powers are "incomplete." He notes that AL-SHA'B Chief Editor Majdi Husayn was attacked in broad daylight in Cairo, but the prime minister has done nothing about it. He points out that the reason for this is that the attack was politically-motivated and came with "orders from above." Accordingly, the issue is "beyond the jurisdiction" of the prime minister, he adds. Another example, he adds, is the detention a few months ago of a number of professors and professionals on charges of being Muslim Brotherhood members. He adds: "Had Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri's powers been complete and not curtailed, he would have investigated the validity of the charges against these elite professors and professional leaders, but he paid no attention to this issue and saw it as beyond his jurisdiction." Concluding, 'Abd-al-Quddus writes: "The problem of the efficient Prime Minister Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri is that he is in a police state based on autocracy and the slogan: We will sacrifice our soul and blood for you president, and this is the secret of his curtailed powers!"

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: Officials Denounce Israeli Plans in Jerusalem

JN1508164296 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1300 GMT 15 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] 'Adnan al-Husayni, head of the Awqaf Department in occupied Jerusalem, denounced Israeli schemes to change the features of the holy places in occupied Jerusalem. He said they are strange ideas and an encroachment on others' rights.

Al-Husayni was commenting on the intention of the Israeli occupation authorities to demolish part of the walls of al-Aqsa Mosque and of the holy city on the pretext of conducting maintenance on them. He said: If these walls really need restoration, we will do it because it is our business and not Israel's business. He added that the Israeli scheme will receive a violent reaction from the Palestinian Arab people.

For his part, Lawyer Ibrahim Qandalaft, official in charge of Christian affairs at the National Authority, said any change in the features of the holy city is considered a violation of international agreements and the Geneva Convention. He added that international resolutions consider Jerusalem an occupied territory and do not permit the Israeli occupation authorities to change its historic and religious landmarks.

Palestinian Affairs: Israel Said 'Crippling' Gaza Airport Operation

JN1508170696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1100 GMT 15 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Brigadier General Fayiz Zaydan, director general of the Palestinian Civil Aviation Department, accused Israel of obstructing all agreements signed between the Palestinian and Israeli sides. In an interview with the Voice of Palestine this morning, he said that Israel is crippling the operation of Gaza International Airport despite the fact that there is an agreement in this respect. He noted that the Palestinian airport has been prepared to operate regular flights for about two months.

Palestinian Affairs: Palestinian-Israeli Committee Discusses Gaza Airport

JN1508172696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1300 GMT 15 Aug 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Joint [Palestinian-Israeli] Civil Committee held a meeting at the Rafah crossing this afternoon. The meeting, which ended a short while ago, addressed the outstanding issues concerning the Gaza International Airport. Before the meeting, Jamil al-Tarifi, minister of civil affairs, said the meeting aimed to discuss the protocol on the arrangements and measures concerning the airport and ways to inaugurate it and fly aircraft to and from it.

The Israeli side wants to impose full security and administrative control over the airport in violation of the Taba agreement, but the Palestinian side rejects this. Brigadier General Fayiz Zaydan, head of the Civil Aviation Authority, called for operating the Palestinian airport immediately.

The Palestinian delegation included Major General 'Abd-al-Razzaq al-Yahya, official in charge of the Higher Security Committee; Brig. Gen. Zaydan; and Nazmi Muhanna, director general of the Palestinian crossings. The Israeli side was led by General Oren Shahor who stressed the need for both sides to discuss the details of the agreement regarding the airport.

Palestinian Affairs: Security, Technical Committees Formed on Gaza Airport

JN1508203296 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 15 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian side, led by Minister of Civil Affairs Jamil al-Tarifi, and the Israeli side, led by Oren Shahor, agreed to form a technical and a security committee to prepare for the inauguration of the Gaza International Airport.

Al-Tarifi stressed that the airport site falls within the Palestinian geographic jurisdiction, pointing out that it would be possible to have Israeli observers at the airport. However, he added, security and administrative control would remain strictly in Palestinian hands. Al-Tarifi said that the Palestinian and the Israeli sides will hold working sessions to discuss implementing the agreement on crossings, adding that the Civil Affairs Committee will meet late next week.

Palestinian Affairs: Islamic Jihad Movement Denounces Settlement Activity

JN1508203596 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 15 Aug 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Jihad Movement-al-Aqsa Battalions denounced the Israeli Government's unleashing of settlement activity in the Palestinian territories. In a statement, the movement also denounced the Netanyahu government's procrastination on implementing the agreements signed with the Palestinian National Authority. The al-Aqsa Battalions urged the Arab governments, the international community, and the United Nations to pressure Israel to stop its violations of the agreements signed by the PLO and Israel.

Palestinian Affairs: Aide 'Angrily' Denies Reported 'Arafat Assassination Bid

MM1608104096 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 16 Aug 96 p 4

[Unattributed report: "Angry Response to Israeli Report of Assassination Attempt on 'Arafat"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — A Palestinian official responded angrily to Israeli radio's report yesterday of an assassination attempt on Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat. The official in the Palestinian Embassy in Amman said: "This report is totally devoid of any truth and is intended to spread confusion."

In a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, the source added that Israel has recently started spreading rumors aimed at making the Palestinian Authority look as though it is incapable of controlling security in the Palestinian areas and as an attempt to avoid implementing the agreements.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Calls on Palestinians To Rise Up Against Settlements

NC1508123696 Paris AFP in English 1218 GMT 15 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jerusalem, Aug 15 (AFP) — The Islamic militant group Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] on Thursday [15 August] called for Palestinians to rise up against Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and to step up the resistance against Israel.

"Hamas calls on the Palestinian people to take a tough stand against attempts to confiscate our land and to enlarge the settlements of the criminal enemy," said the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in a leaflet. The leaflet also urged Palestinians to "defy the Zionist arrogance and to intensify the struggle against the occupier all over our occupied land."

The rightwing Israeli government of Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu said on August 2 it was lifting a four-year-old freeze on expanding Jewish settlements in the occupied territories. And earlier this week Israel agreed to set up 300 mobile homes to expand classroom and office space in the settlements.

The Hamas leaflet also accused the Palestinian Authority, headed by Yasir 'Arafat, of betraying the "dreams and legitimate rights" of the Palestinian people. It said the decision to expand settlements should "make the Palestinian people understand the enormity of the crime of Oslo and its disastrous consequences on the fatherland and the nation."

Under the Oslo accords Israel and the PLO agreed to limited Palestinian autonomy in the occupied territories, a move fiercely condemned Hamas and described in the leaflet as "a great service given freely to Zionist cause."

"The Oslo Authority is content to just to condemn and complain against the confiscation of land and the building of settlements," said the Islamic fundamentalist movement's leaflet.

Hamas has been responsible for the majority of anti-Israeli attacks since the signing of autonomy accords in September 1993, including three suicide bombings in Israel in February and March which left more than 40 dead.

Palestinian Affairs: Al-Rujub, Jordanian Aide Cited on Arms Smuggling

MM1608110296 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 16 Aug 96 p 4

[Report by 'Ali al-Salih in London and AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Amman: "Israel Reveals Arms Smuggling, Palestinians Consider It Old Issue"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Colonel Jibril al-Rujub, the Palestinian Preventive Security chief in the West Bank, has condemned Israel for revealing details of the arrest of some Palestinians from the Hebron area involved in arms smuggling (on behalf of the Palestinian National Authority [PNA], according to Israeli claims) across the Dead Sea. In a statement to AL-SHARQ AL- AWSAT, Col. al-Rujub said that "this is an old issue. I do not know why it is being brought up at this moment in time." Col. al-Rujub refused to give further details.

In a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, a Jordanian Foreign Ministry spokesman said that he is surprised at Israel's decision to circulate this report at this stage, when there is an attempt at bringing Palestinian and Israeli views closer. [passage omitted]

Palestinian sources said Israel has decided to bring up the affair, which has been followed up by the Israeli security organs for some months through Arabists, that is since the time the Labor party was in power under Shim'on Peres' leadership, because "it was not in Peres' interest to reveal this affair, particularly since the elections were imminent. Now, however, it is in the ruling Likud party's interest to bring it up and try to use it as a means of pressure on the PNA, since, because of international pressures, Israel finds itself, one way or another, forced to redeploy its forces in Hebron."

An authoritative Jordanian source also did not rule out that "the Likud government's decision to leak the news may be linked to the current contacts on the redeployment of Israeli forces in the occupied city of Hebron." The source told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that "the issue goes back to the time of the Labor government, and the fact that it is being revealed now shows that there is a political intent behind it." The source pointed to similar incidents which were announced immediately and which were handled within the framework of the joint Jordanian-Israeli security committee.

Algeria

Algeria: Security Forces Neutralize 1300 Islamists

LD1608111296 Paris Radio France International in French 0730 GMT 16 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] One thousand three hundred armed individuals have been neutralized [as heard] by the security services in Algeria — that at least is the figure published by the daily LIBERTE. The paper did not reveal its sources and gave no details of security service losses.

Egypt

Egypt: Yemeni President Phones Mubarak on Hanish Islands

NC1508193896 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1928 GMT 15 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Aug (MENA)—This evening President Husni Mubarak held a telephone conversation with United Arab Emirates President Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan. They exchanged views on the latest developments in the Middle East.

President Mubarak also received a telephone call from Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih. They exchanged views on the situation in the Hanish islands.

Egypt: Mubarak Reportedly Warned U.S. Against Attacking Libya

NC1508162396 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 6 Aug 96 pp 1, 8

[Report by Mahmud Bakri: "Mubarak Warned of U.S. Contacts To Attack Libya. Rejection of Any U.S. Moves Against Egypt's Possession of Missiles"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The U.S. Administration has contacted countries bordering the Libyan Jamahiryah with the aim of preparing the way for a hostile action against it through which it can destroy what it regards a chemical plant in Tarhunah.

During his recent visit to the United States, President Mubarak warned against these contacts and the damage they will cause to security in the Middle East. He refused to cooperate with the U.S. authorities to eliminate the dangers of Libya's chemical weapons, noting that Egypt has ascertained through its own means that the Libyan chemical plant in Tarhunah is not designed for producing chemical weapons.

In his meetings with the U.S. national security adviser, officials in the Congressional Foreign Relations Committee, and officials in other U.S. departments, President Mubarak warned the United States against carrying out any military plans against Libya or looking for an alternative to Colonel al-Qadhdhafi. The president pointed out the dangers such actions have for stability, not only in Libya but in the entire Middle East. He called on U.S. officials to change their policy toward al-Qadhdhafi, stressing that he is a strong personality capable of acting internationally and containing the Libyan tribes. He pointed out that U.S. departments have no knowledge of the nature of the tribes and of life inside Libya, adding that any attempt to impose any figure on Libya without the Libyan people's consent is doomed to failure. Mubarak called on U.S. officials to initiate a dialogue with al-Qadhdhafi in order to get acquainted with his new orientations, noting that U.S. reports on Libya are old ones that do not reflect al-Qadhdhafi's new orientations.

U.S. departments have urged that countries and leaders other than Egypt should be relied upon in dealing with Libya during the coming stage.

President Mubarak's talks in Washington also included a discussion of the issue of armament in the Middle East from all angles and were not confined to any particular country. He proposed that the issue of long range weapons and the advanced missiles systems that countries have, including Israel, be resolved before tackling the issue of the plants that pose a threat. Regarding these plants, he rejected the notion that each type of weapon produced in them should be dealt with separately. He pointed out his rejection of any U.S. moves against Egypt's possession of any types of missiles, stressing that Egypt's national security could require this or that type of weapon. He also pointed out that Egypt's possession of weapons or missiles is a reaction to the threat posed by the armament of neighboring countries, such as Israel, and that Egypt has not so far taken any steps to acquire weapons or missiles that threaten other countries' security. President Mubarak stressed that all the types of missiles in the region threaten other countries' security in one way or another but Israel remains the most advanced in that field. The president criticized the moves to back Israel with the most advanced missiles and weapons and the disregard for the effects of such moves on the Arab countries. He pointed out that supplying Israel with any advanced systems will prompt all the Arab countries to seek to obtain more advanced weapons and missiles. He called for making the U.S. military systems given to Israel contingent on developments in the settlement process in the region. He underlined the importance of the U.S. role in achieving a military and security balance in the Middle East.

Egypt: Diplomatic Source Says Egypt Not To Sign Chemical Weapons Treaty

NC1508141196 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1235 GMT 15 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Aug (MENA)—An Egyptian diplomatic source in Cairo has reiterated that Egypt will not sign the treaty banning chemical weapons in view of the existing security imbalance in the Middle East, despite its support for the rules of the agreement and the fact that it was among the first countries that helped formulate and improve the treaty's rules during the disarmament conference in Geneva.

In a statement today, the source said that the Egyptian stand is a "regional" one. In a reference to Israel, it said that Egypt has reservations because a country in the region has a nuclear program that is not subject to international guarantees and this country rejects the international efforts to make the Middle East a nuclear free region.

It added that Egypt's stand is clear and it will not sign the chemical weapons treaty unless Israel signs the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. It noted that neither Russia nor the United States have ratified the chemical [weapons] treaty even though they have the largest stockpile of chemical weapons in the world.

The Egyptian diplomatic source underlined the need to stop depriving the developing countries of the right to the peaceful use of chemical materials, explaining that "from the official point of view" it is not right that the treaty should lay down restrictions or deprive developing countries of the right to the peaceful benefit of their civilian industries.

The source noted that 47 countries have ratified the treaty so far while it needs the ratification of 160 countries in order to be put into effect, and this number has not been reached yet. It added that many countries are sympathetic to the Egyptian stand of refusing to sign the treaty and support it.

Egypt: Newspapers Warn of Consequences of Israeli 'Inflexibility'

NC1608080596 Cairo MENA in Arabic
0510 GMT 16 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 16 Aug (MENA)—Cairo newspapers today unanimously describe the Israeli Government's decision to abolish the restrictions on settlement expansion in the Palestinian territories, and Israel's continued attempts to erect obstacles in the face of negotiations, as an unequivocal threat to the regional peace process. The papers also note that Israel's stance is a blatant contradiction to all the signed agreements between the concerned Arab parties and Israel, starting with the Madrid Conference and ending with the agreements signed in Oslo and Cairo.

The papers, which have different political affiliations, warn that this kind of move will undermine the continued and relentless efforts exerted by all peace-loving countries to continue the Middle East peace process. The papers urge all Arab countries to consolidate ranks in the face of the repeated Israeli violations of the signed agreements.

In its commentary today, AL-AHRAM points to the continued Egyptian efforts to salvage the peace process, saying that these extensive efforts will make other parties resort to more hardline positions. The paper adds that it has become clear now that whenever there is a greater degree of Arab consolidation on the horizon, some parties start adopting hardline and more intransigent positions as if their main aim is to thwart any possible opportunity to advance the peace process.

AL-AHRAM asserts that if the Israeli Government persists in its positions and intransigence, then it will be considered by the entire world as the party rejecting peace. The paper warns that Israel must show wisdom or else it will open the doors for violent developments that it will not be able or ready to face or endure.

Egypt: AL-AKHBAR Views U.S. Stand on Turkish-Iranian Accord

NC1508111696 Cairo MENA in English
0840 GMT 15 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Cairo, 15 Aug (MENA) — [Passage omitted] AL-AKHBAR, leading Cairo daily, has commented editorially on the American reaction to the Turkish-Iranian deal, saying in part: The American reaction to the 'historic' Iranian-Turkish natural gas deal has been restricted so far to disappointment and frustration voiced by a White House spokesman". [no begin quotation marks as received]

Under the deal, Turkey will get as of the year 1999 natural gas deliveries amounting to 190 billion cubic metres over 22 years at a rate of 2 billion cubic metres as of the year 2005.

The value of the deal reaches 23 billion dollars rather than the 20 billion dollars that were set under the agreement that was initialed earlier.

"The American disappointment is due to the fact that the deal was signed a few days after U.S. President Bill Clinton endorsed the so-called D'Amato law, which imposes sanctions on companies investing more than 40 million dollars on oil and gas in Libya or Iran." [passage omitted]

The entire issue is thus raising a lot of questions about the nature of the U.S.-led new world order and whether the United States can compel countries around the world to abide by its own resolutions and attitudes when such resolutions and attitudes come in contradiction with their interests.

The question is also whether the United States has to explore the interests of others required to comply with such resolutions and attitudes.

Libya

Libya: Al-Qadhdhafi Reportedly Suffers Heart Attack

BR1608084096 Rome LA REPUBBLICA in Italian 14 Aug 96 p 14

[Report by Magdi Allam]

[FBIS Translated Text] Libya is in chaos. The Army has mounted a massive offensive against the Islamic guerrillas while apparently al-Qadhdhafi has had a heart attack and is no longer capable of holding on to the reins of power.

If the colonel, who has been in power since 1969, were to quit the scene and the regular Army to be defeated, the country would fall rapidly into the hands of the Islamists. The entire southern shore of the Mediterranean, where the Islamists have been conducting a bloody terrorist war for years against the regimes in power in Egypt and in Algeria, would be in danger of being overrun by the rebellion of Allah's fanatics.

Italy, which imports 30 percent of its crude oil from Libya and 20 percent of its gas from Algeria, would be facing a serious energy crisis.

Initial reports from diplomatic sources appear to confirm that we are witnessing a showdown between the regular Army and the Islamic rebels. The escalation in violence is proven by the fact that also the Air Force is taking part in these military operations for the first time. Dozens of Sukhoy and Mig-23 fighter-bombers have been bombarding the coastal area of Derna, the regions of Djibil-al-Akhdar, and the Green Mountain in the east of the country toward the border with Egypt, for days now.

Officially the Army announced a month ago that it would be conducting military exercises using real ammunition in the Derna area. But the addition of a startling warning made it quite clear that it was going to be something quite different, in other words a merciless hunt for Islamic militants: "All civilians must quit the zone of maneuvers if they wish to avoid being hit by the ammunition." In other words, these strange military maneuvers were to take place in heavily populated areas where the authorities believe Islamic guerrillas to be hiding. At the same time all the country's hospitals were warned to gear up to receive the victims of the "military maneuvers."

It is certain that Derna is surrounded by Libyan troops and that only people with special safe-conducts can get in and out. Recent firefights and ambushes have been reported in the area on the part both of the regular Army and of militants from the Islamic Group [source capitalization]. The government in Tripoli has confined its comments to a communique stating that drug traffickers are being rounded up.

As of yesterday Islamic guerrillas of the Islamic group are fighting a fierce battle against the regular Army. Last March some 400 Islamists, who escapred from Benghazi jail, were massacred after bitter fighting during which 26 Libyan soldiers were killed. A reliable source in Derna claims that at the beginning of June an Army vehicle was attacked by an Islamic comando group which scored a bull's eye using a bazooka and killing 40 soldiers. According to the weekly AL-WASAT published in London, some 350 Islamic rebels have been killed in the past year.

Businessmen, mostly of Libyan or Egyptian extraction, who reached Cairo yesterday coming from Libya unanimously described the offensive as an intensification of al-Qadhdhafi's efforts to wipe out the Islamic fundamentalist movements.

Reports of a worsening in the state of al-Qadhdhafi's health also came from diplomatic sources. The Libyan leader has not been mentioned by the government mass media for some days now: an unprecedented event. People are whispering that al-Qadhdhafi has been struck down by a heart attack and is no longer capable of performing. Be that as it may, a Libyan secret service official, speaking anonymously, stated quite categorically that al-Qadhdhafi will make a public appearance 1 September, the anniversary of his seizure of power in 1969. On that occasion al-Qadhdhafi is expected to announce changes to the system of "local government committees" with a view to improving the way the struggle against Islamism is conducted.

The grave questionmark hanging over Libya concerns the Islamists' ability to seize power. According to diplomatic sources whom we questioned, the Islamists have allegedly succeeded in infiltrating the regular Army and in recruiting young conscripts to the cause of Islam. They stress, however, that at least in the short term al-Qadhdhafi's regime does not seem likely to be in any great danger. Indeed the Libyan leader relies principally on the secret services run by his relations rather than on the Army. But if the Islamists succeed in laying their hands on the Army, al-Qadhdhafi would be finished.

Libya: Cairo Embassy 'Spokeswoman' Denies Clashes in East

JN1508160996 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1110 GMT 15 Aug 96

[Report by Muna Salim in Cairo]

[FBIS Translated Text] Libyan opposition sources in Cairo said that the western area of Libya last week was the scene of riots when Libyan security forces opened fire on African laborers, who were assembled in a camp to the west of Tripoli. The sources said the African laborers tried to escape, but the security forces confronted them and opened fire.

Also according to the opposition sources, the Libyan Air Force last month bombarded al-Jabal al-Akhdar area in East Libya to destroy caves, where Libyan Islamists are thought to be hiding.

Su'ad Bashir, spokeswoman for the Libyan Embassy in Cairo, denied these reports and said:

[Begin Bashir recording] Never. There is no grain of truth in these reports. They are only tendentious rumors, promoted by the so-called opposition. Certain western states are trying to defame Libya, but such things have not happened. All these reports are untrue. There may have been a chase of some smugglers or drug traffickers. The police may have chased such people, but they [the opposition] claim this was a camp. However, tendentious rumors, which aim to distort things, are unfounded. [end recording]

It is well known that for more than one year now, there have been sporadic clashes in Libya between the government and the Islamists in the eastern region.

Libya: Militant Islamic Group Lists Casualties in Recent Clashes

MM1508160096 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 15 Aug 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Libyan Fundamentalists Say Battles Took Place in Durnah"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI — The Libyan Militant Islamic Group [LMIG] has announced that, over the past few days, bloody clashes and battles took place between its elements and the Libyan security forces, resulting in a large number of dead on both sides. Among the dead was a captain who was a cousin of Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi.

LMIG Statement Number 7, sent to AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI, gave detailed information about some of the battles which took place mostly in the Durnah area, including the "Abu-Musafir" operation which left eight dead among the government forces and the "Wadi al-Husayn" operation to the east of Durnah, in which helicopters and tanks were used, but which, the statement says, did not cause any casualties among the LMIG elements, who withdrew to safer locations.

The statement said that the fiercest battles took place in 'Ayn Marah when LMIG elements from the Khalid Ibn-al-Walid company led by Abu-Sufyan fought the Husayn al-Juwayfi security battalion, known as the al-Jawarih battalion, in reference to Colonel al-Jarih Farkash, the uncle of the Libyan leader's wife Safiyah, and inflicted huge losses on it whereby the battalion's vanguard and rearguard were shelled with RPG's.

The statement described this as the fiercest battle, which claimed the lives of Abu-Sufyan— his real name was Khalid al-Zantani — the operation commander and a veteran Libyan mujahid in Afghanistan who comes from Tripoli's Sports City district; 'Abd-al- Basit, a Libyan Afghan from the city of al-Zawiyah; 'Abd-al-Razzaq al-Dali al-Mazni (Musa) from Durnah, a teacher at the Ibn Sina School; Sami al-Madhuni from Sabratah who fought in Afghanistan; Mansur al-Kilani ('Attiyah), a teacher at the 'Azzuz Preparatory School in Durnah; and Fawzi Jabr, a geography teacher from al- Bayda', who was also known as 'Abd-al-Muhaymin.

The statement said that there were 18 dead and 17 wounded among the government forces. Among the dead was Capt. Salih Mabruk al- Qadhdhafi, deputy commander of the al-Jawarih brigade; Salih Musa Shu'ayb, 'Adil Muhammad Hamad, 'Abdallah 'Abd-al-Wahid (from the Marawah area), Khalid 'Ali Salamah (from al-Wasitah), Jad-al-Mawla Sa'id (from al-Bayda'), Jibril Muhammad (from Tulmaythah), 'Awad Abu-Lutay'ah (from al-Wasitah), Faraj Salim Muhammad (from al- Bayda') Muhammad Radiallah Abu-Bakr (from Zawiyah al-'Urqub), 'Abdallah Yusuf Muftah (from Marawah), 'Ashur Muhammad 'Abd-al-Hadi (al-Bayda') Muftah 'Abdallah Muhammad (Qandulah) Faraj Salih al-Amin (Susah), Fayiz al-Musmari (al-Bayda') and Najib Sa'id (al-Bayda').

The statement said that Lieutenant Colonel Hamad Afkayrayn from al-Bayda' was shot when his car was fired upon, and said that it was the lieutenant colonel who killed one of the group's leaders, Shaykh Abu-Yahia.

Libya: Islamic Martyrs Movement Claims Military Operations

MM1608094596 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 16 Aug 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Two Libyan Groups: Scores of Dead in Fighting in Durnah, al-Bayda', and Banghazi"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London, AL-HAYAH — Two Islamist groups yesterday claimed responsibility for a series of military operations in Libya. In two separate statements received by AL-HAYAH, the Militant Islamic Group [MIG] and the Islamic Martyrs Movement [IMM] said that the situation in the eastern part of Libya has deteriorated widely and that several battles took place between their elements and the security forces, resulting in scores of dead on both sides. While the MIG spoke of a "tragedy" taking place in 'Ayn Marah and in which senior officers were killed, the IMM said that its elements planned to assassinate Revolutionary Command Council member Abu-Bakr Yunus Jabir, but that Libyan security discovered their plan. [passage omitted]

In its statement, the IMM also claimed responsibility for a number of operations against the Libyan regime. The IMM said that three of its elements from the "Abu-'Umar" battalion in Banghazi's al-Zaytun district, in conjunction with five of the IMM's nonmilitary members, planned to assassinate Staff Colonel Abu-Bakr Yunus, secretary of the general people's committee for defense (minister and member of the Revolutionary Command Council), as he chaired a meeting of military commanders in Banghazi. The IMM said that the plan was foiled following its discovery by Libyan security after the arrest of the operation's leader, Second Lieutenant Muhammad Akram, who was interrogated and revealed the names of his group's members. The IMM said, however, that the other group members fled to a safe place.

The IMM also spoke of another operation carried out in Banghazi on 28 July. It said that its elements opened fire on a military compound near the Jamahiri Guard headquarters in al-Zaytun district, killing Staff Colonel 'Abd-al-Rahim al-Hiblawi al-Qadhdhafi, commander of the anti-atheism organ and head of security coordination in Banghazi, and First Lieutenant Khamis Mas'ud Abu-Munyar al-Qadhdhafi, and wounding some 20 elements in the compound.

The IMM also announced that, last week, three of its elements killed (56-year-old) Colonel Hamid Farhat, an official in the Jamahiriyah Security organ, outside his house situated behind the Salah-al-Din secondary school and opposite the al-Sayyidah 'A'ishah Mosque in al-Zaytun district. It said that Libyan security blocked off the area and launched a campaign to track down the movement's members.

The IMM spoke also of the assassination of Captain 'Awad Musbah Ahnish and Captain Bin-Jarir Khamis on the highway linking the Bu 'Atani area and al-'Urubah district to the east of Banghazi. It added that the operation took place on the afternoon of Thursday 8 August and that the two captains were in the "Guards Company" before their transfer to Banghazi. [passage omitted]

Libya: Diplomats Say 2,000 Immigrants Escape From Tripoli Prison

NC15[illegible]8200296 Paris AFP in English 1531 GMT 15 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] NICOSIA, Aug 15 (AFP—Around 2,000 illegal immigrants broke out of a prison near Tripoli and several hundred of them have taken refuge in the Sudanese and Chadian consulates in the Libyan capital, diplomats said Thursday [15 August].

"Around 2,000 detainees at Janzur prison due to be deported for illegal residence succeeded in escaping on Monday and fled into the streets," said a western diplomat contacted by AFP in Nicosia.

"Around 150 of them have taken refuge in the Chadian consulate where you can see them on the roofs, and 200 others are currently in the Sudanese consulate," he added. The diplomat said both consulates are in the process of negotiating the detainees' repatriation.

He said road blocks set up for the September 1 anniversary of the Libyan revolution did not stop the majority of immigrants from disappearing in-land, and that the Libyan authorities had made no mention of the break-out.

Sudan

Sudan: MENA Says 38 Officers Arrested in Failed Coup Attempt

NC1508185896 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1840 GMT 15 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Khartoum, 15 Aug (MENA)—A MENA correspondent in Khartoum has learned that 38 officers, the majority of them retired, have been arrested in the failed coup attempt that took place during the past few days.

The correspondent also learned that most of the detainees were operating in the Red Sea military zone and Sudan's eastern region.

Informed sources told the MENA correspondent that the detainees are affiliated with the opposition alliance forces led by Brigadier General 'Abd-al-'Aziz Khalid, which are carrying out their military operations against the government troops from Eritrea.

No information has been issued by official Sudanese circles about the failed coup, though there are meetings at the chiefs of staff level to discuss the matter, identify those involved, and complete the arrest of the remaining elements.

It is known that the Sudanese authorities foiled a coup attempt in early March 1996. The coup leader and those involved were arrested but have not been tried yet.

Sudan: Opposition Spokesman Denies Reports of Attempted Coup

MM1608101196 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 16 Aug 96 p 1

[Report by Kamal Hamid in Khartoum: "Reports of a Rebellion in Port Sudan, 20 Military Personnel Arrested"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Passage omitted] In Cairo, Muhammad al-Mu'tasim Hakim, member of the opposition Sudanese Unionist Party's Executive Bureau, denied recent reports of a foiled coup attempt in Sudan. He accused the Khartoum regime of "leaking, every now and again, reports of fictitious coup attempts, in an attempt to eliminate their political and military opponents and divert the Sudanese people's attention from the sanctions expected from the Security Council and from the living conditions that the people have to put up with." He added that since 1989, apart from the genuine coup attempt of 1990, there have been reports of some 50 coup attempts, without announcing the names of those involved in them. [passage omitted]

Sudan: First Vice President Urges Garang To Join Peace Process

EA1508202096 Khartoum SUNA in English 1714 GMT 15 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Khartoum, 15 Aug (SUNA) — First vice-president of the Republic Gen. al-Zubayr Muhammad Salih has reiterated [the] call on John Garang [the Sudanese People's Liberation Army leader] to join the peace process and sign the Political Charter on peace.

Receiving Thursday [15 August] Ton Arok, chairman of Bor citizens group who arrived from Nairobi recently, the first vice-president pointed out that the door is still open for Garang's faction to join the Political Charter for realizing comprehensive peace in the southern part of the country.

Arok, speaking to SUNA, said the meeting had reviewed the articles of the Political Charter and the possibility of developing it into a peace agreement in the future. He said they shared identical point of views, underscoring Salih's call on Garang's faction to join the Political Charter.

Arok described the declaration of principles reached between the government and [the] Nuba Mountains factions as a great boost for [the] country, saying that it does not contradict the Political Charter.

Kuwait

Kuwait: Information Minister Interviewed on Terrorism, Iraq

NC1508121796 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0745 GMT 15 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kuwait, 15 Aug (MENA)—Kuwaiti Information Minister Shaykh Sa'ud Nasir al-Sabah has reiterated that the relations between Egypt and Kuwait are profound, distinguished, and model. He added: We hope that Kuwait's relations with the other Arab countries will be on the same level. These remarks were made by the Kuwaiti information minister during his meeting with MENA and SANA correspondents as well as with representatives of some Egyptian magazines on the occasion of the Kuwaiti prime minister's visit to Egypt, slated to start on Saturday, 17 August. The Kuwaiti prime minister will also visit Syria and Lebanon. [passage omitted]

To a question about reports that some fundamentalist groups in Kuwait have financed terrorism in Egypt, Shaykh Sa'ud said there have been no confirmations or proof from Egypt that such groups have financed terrorism against Egypt. He added that the issue is based on no more than reports disseminated by some Arab papers. He added: We would like to have complete cooperation with Egypt in this regard. We also want the persons and sides be identified so that we can adopt the necessary measures. Our policy is based on nonintervention in the domestic affairs of other countries, the Kuwaiti minister said.

The Kuwaiti information minister said that terrorism is a serious phenomenon and we in Kuwait suffered immensely from terrorism over the past years. Therefore, we must be very careful because there is no country which is spared by terrorism. He said that the danger lies in local terrorism and this dictates that we uproot this problem. [passage omitted]

The Kuwaiti information minister emphasized that his country is still in a state of war with Iraq and that the current situation is just a cease-fire. This situation has dictated the signing of defense agreements with the coalition countries. He said that these agreements concern Kuwait only. According to the agreements, no bases or facilities in Kuwait will be used to strike at any neighboring state. This is a clear-cut provision in the agreements that were concluded to deal with Kuwait's current circumstances. [passage omitted]

Kuwait: Information Minister Previews Heir's Tour

MM1508131396 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 15 Aug 96 p 2

[Report by Ghunaym al-Matyari in Kuwait: "Kuwaiti Information Minister Tells AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: We Feel Uneasy About Any Provocations in the Region, We Must Remove the Tension Between Washington and Tehran"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwaiti Information Minister Sa'ud Nasir al-Sabah has stressed that "Kuwaiti Heir Apparent and Prime Minister Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah's visit to Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon, due to start on Saturday, is part of the consultation process with the three states, aimed at boosting Arab cooperation." He said that during the first stop on his tour he [the heir apparent] will discuss with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak the agreements and arrangements reached with regard to the peace process in the region.

In an exclusive statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, Shaykh Sa'ud said that this visit follows Egyptian President Husni Mubarak's talks in the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Syria, and said that the heir apparent "wants Kuwait to be in the picture with regard to any development in the peace process in the region, in view of the impact that these developments have on the region." He said: "We believe this to be an important issue on both a Kuwaiti and an international level."

The Kuwaiti information minister stressed that "mutual visits between Arab leaders reinforce Arab cooperation and unify positions on vital issues." On developments in the peace process, the Kuwaiti information minister said: "The presidential elections have kept the U.S. Administration busy, preventing it from following up on the peace process and negotiations between Arabs and Israel. However, it will revert to what it was doing before and gather all the delegations to negotiate according to the principle which was agreed, namely the land-for-peace principle."

Shaykh Sa'ud commented on Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's positions, saying that "his statements reflect the positions of the ruling party, known for its extremist positions on the continuation of the negotiations and on honoring the pledges made to the Palestinian Authority."

He said: "These statements will not affect the peace process in the future," adding that "the Arabs have adapted to the obstacles created by Israel to foil the peace process." He went on: "Israeli proposals will change after the U.S. elections. Our objective, as Arabs, is to end the hostility between us and Israel by finding a comprehensive peaceful solution guaranteeing safety and security for all the region's peoples."

On Israeli proposals to negotiate with Lebanon and then with Syria, the Kuwaiti information minister said: "We must not leave Syria alone in the arena, at the mercy of Israeli plans which are not serious. Indeed, it is our duty to speak with a single voice in favor of collective, rather than individual, negotiations." He said that "Israel must realize that we will not relinquish a single inch of the Arab land that it occupies."

On Shaykh Sa'd's visit and whether it is linked to the tension between the United States and Iran, Shaykh Sa'ud said that "there has been a disagreement between the United States and Iran since the start of the Iranian revolution. The tension is nothing new, and we must take a serious look at the causes of this escalation." He added: "We are uneasy about any provocation by any state in the region which could harm the interests of any neighboring states, including Iran."

He added: "The United States has its own short- and long-term strategy in the region." He stressed: "We must play a part in removing this tension between the United States and Iran."

Shaykh Sa'ud al-Sabah explained that there are principles and constants that all the region's states must understand, because any escalation in the region is a threat to the safety and stability of the region's states, and this is totally unacceptable.

On Kuwaiti-Egyptian relations and the strain affecting them, the Kuwaiti information minister denied that "relations with our Egyptian brothers are strained." He said that "this is only the journalists' impression." He said that there has been a noticeable improvement in relations, in the political, economic, security, and media fields. He explained that "some people have interpreted the earlier delay to the visit by the heir apparent and prime minister [to Egypt], which was due to personal reasons, as being due to strained relations. However, President Husni Mubarak understands the circumstances which caused the delay." He described Kuwaiti-Egyptian relations as "excellent" and stressed that there are some agreements which will be ratified.

On Shaykh Sa'd's visit to Lebanon during election time and the possibility that it might be misinterpreted, Shaykh Sa'ud said that "Kuwait rejects any interference in the brotherly states and in Lebanon's domestic policy," pointing out that "the visit was in response to a request by Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, who insisted that the visit should take place at this time, in view of the intimate Kuwaiti-Lebanese relations and Kuwait's constant support for restoring Lebanon's stability, achieving its reconstruction at the hands of its sons, and ensuring the liberation of the south from the occupation."

It should be mentioned that Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, Kuwaiti heir apparent and prime minister, will leave for Alexandria next Saturday morning at the head of a high-level delegation also comprising Second Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Nasir al-Rawdan, Information Minister Shaykh Sa'ud Nasir al-Sabah, and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Dakhil. The tour will include Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon.

Yemen

Yemen: Yemeni Forces Recapture Lesser Hanish Island

NC1508210996 Cairo MENA in Arabic
2040 GMT 15 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Aug (MENA)—The MENA correspondent has learned that the Yemeni forces retook the Lesser Hanish island from the Eritrean forces this morning. The Yemeni forces imposed their full control on the island after expelling the Eritrean forces, which had been deployed there since Saturday [10 August]. The operation took place under air bombardment and Yemeni artillery fire from Zuqar Island, the largest island in the Hanish archipelago.

On the diplomatic level, Dr. 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, Yemeni deputy prime minister and foreign minister, this evening summoned all the ambassadors accredited to Sanna to inform them of the aggression that took place on Lesser Hanish island on Saturday. He asked them for their countries' help in supporting Yemen's legitimate rights in the Greater and Lesser Hanish islands. Al- Iryani informed the ambassadors that the French government, which is mediating between Sanaa and Asmara, today sent a memorandum to UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali on the outcome of the aerial and naval surveillance operations conducted by France in the southern Red Sea to monitor the military situation.

Yemen: President, UN Secretary General Discuss Eritrean 'Aggression' on Island

JN1508185896 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 15 Aug 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] At 1915 today, Brother Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, president of the republic, received a telephone call from UN Secretary

General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali. The UN secretary general informed the brother president that the United Nations is fully aware of all the details of the military presence set up by the Eritrean Government in the al-Hanish al- Saghir Island since 10 August. He also informed the president that the United Nations is exerting intensive efforts to restore a normal situation to the island. Ghali appealed to the president and the Yemeni Government to resort to self-restraint and wisdom and to give the ongoing endeavor and diplomatic efforts enough time.

In his discussion with the UN secretary general, the president said this new blatant aggression against Yemeni sovereignty by the Eritrean Government is considered a serious defiance of international will, as well as a blatant violation of the Agreement of Principles signed between our country and Eritrea under the sponsorship of friendly France in Paris on 31 May. The president added that this also constitutes an encroachment on the safety of international navigation to the south of the Red Sea and endangers security and safety in the region. The president stressed our country's commitment to safeguard its legitimate rights and national sovereignty over its territory.

Yemen: 'Sources' Say Eritrean Troops Still on Disputed Island

JN1508134596 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1100 GMT 15 Aug 96

[Telephone interview with correspondent Faysal Mukarram by Kamal Tarabayh in Sanaa on 15 August — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Mukarram] In fact, brother Kamal, there are several stories about what happened recently between Yemen and Eritrea. One story says the Eritreans sent their troops to al-Hashish al-Saghir island and then retreated after laying mines. Another story says the Eritreans stayed on the island until yesterday. However, the story which has been confirmed by official sources in the Yemeni Government says Eritrean soldiers — between 50 and 100 — are still on the island and have been there since Saturday [10 August]. Official sources here deny there was any military clash between the Yemeni and Eritrean forces.

[Tarabayh] Faysal, in your opinion, and on the basis of information you obtained from various sources in Sanaa, what caused the reemergence of tension in this region despite the agreement that was reached in May in Paris?

[Mukarram] There was a clash of views during the negotiations between the Yemeni and Eritrean parties in Paris. These negotiations sought to select international arbitrators, decide on the nature of French supervision in the region, and allow each party to present its case. The agreement stipulates that Yemen and Eritrea should abide by international arbitration to decide on sovereignty and to delineate sea borders in the Red Sea. There is also a general feeling here in Yemen, particularly at the official level, that Eritrea may have been pushed by foreign parties to create tension with Yemen in the Red Sea.

[Tarabayh] Faysal Mukarram, what will be the nature of the Yemeni response? Will Yemen be content with diplomatic moves and international contacts, or will it resort to military action?

[Mukarram] The UN secretary general, the French Government, and Ethiopia have promised to intercede to end the tension between Yemen and Eritrea in the Red Sea. Also, Yemen, in its official statements, insists that it will continue to follow the path of peace with Eritrea. However, the Yemeni public and the military establishment are demanding that Yemen stop Eritrean encroachments.

Iraq: Reservists Reportedly Called Up Due to Regional Tension

JN1608110696 Amman AL-HAQIQAH in Arabic 15 Aug 96 p 5

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] There has been a slight improvement in the living conditions of Baghdad residents. Meanwhile, people began to be concerned in the aftermath of the regional political escalation. The exchange of the Iraqi dinar on the black market registered an improvement: 950 dinars to the dollar, in contrast to 1,200 dinars to the dollar on 7 August. This improvement in the exchange rate of the Iraqi dinar came about against the background of reports that the Sanctions Committee affiliated with the UN Security Council officially approved procedures on implementation of the oil-for-food deal signed between Iraq and the United Nations. [passage omitted]

In a separate development, AL-HAQIQAH learned that the Iraqi Government called up the reservists born in 1952, 1954, 1962, 1963, 1964, and 1965. This call-up was apparently made in reaction to the ongoing military escalation in the Gulf region between Iran and the United States and the entry of several Iranian military units into northern Iraq under the pretext of pursuing Iranian Kurds. [passage omitted]

Iraq: Transport Minister Says Preparations Completed at al-Basrah Ports

JN1508093396 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1815 GMT 14 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Al-Basrah, 14 Aug (INA)—Dr. Ahmad Murtada Ahmad, minister of transport and communications, announced that the engineering, technical, and administrative cadres of the Iraqi Ports Public Enterprise have completed preparations at the commercial ports in al-Basrah Governorate to receive various ships that will transport goods in accordance with the memorandum of understanding signed by Iraq and the United Nations on 20 May.

In a statement to the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY during his visit to Umm Qar Port in al-Basrah Governorate, in southern Iraq, he said these preparations included modernizing dock areas and navigational channels, broadening the fronts of the dock areas, expanding storage facilities there, and fully meeting their requirements.

The minister added that a full working plan to modernize and develop the parking lots for cars and trucks at Umm Qasr Port has been worked out. The parking lots will include 36 service offices to organize the traffic of trucks in order to absorb a large number of them and to carry out technical maintenance services for these parking lots and define their routes. He said a large-scale campaign is under way to maintain and change railway sleepers and fix wagons in order to improve the process of transporting commercial goods from al-Basrah to the other governorates.

Iraq: Baghdad Proposes New Road to Turkey To Avoid Kurdish Areas

MM1508110896 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 15 Aug 96 p 2

[Report by Ibrahim Ilyas in Istanbul: "Baghdad Proposes to Ankara To Build an Alternative to the Zakho Road"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Turkish sources revealed yesterday that the Iraqi Government submitted to the Turkish justice and education ministers who have ended an official visit to Baghdad a project to build a new road linking Iraq and Turkey which would not pass through the areas controlled by the Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP], led by Mas'ud Barzani, who opposes Baghdad.

The sources said that the proposed 45-km road will start in the Turkish border city of Silopi and head toward a bridge being built over the Tigris river, which straddles the Turkish-Iraqi border line, in the border triangle between Turkey, Iraq, and Syria. The road will then follow the Iraqi-Syrian borders to link up with a road leading to the city of Mosul.

The sources added that the Iraqi officials presented to the Turkish ministers, Sevket Kazan and Mehmet Segelam [last name as transliterated], detailed maps of the proposed road, which covers 15 km inside Turkish territory and 30 km inside Iraqi territory.

The project is intended to provide an alternative to the international road passing through the Ibrahim al-Khalil border point and the Iraqi Kurdish city of Zakho. Since 1991 this road has been under the control of the KDP, which charges customs duty on goods passing between Iraq and Turkey. [passage omitted]

Israel: Mordekhay Proposes Dual-Track Negotiations With Syrians

TA1508154496 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1400 GMT 15 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay has proposed starting parallel negotiations with Syria in the United States and at B'abda Palace in Beirut. Our political correspondent Udi Segal reports:

[Segal] Mordekhay says he is prepared to meet at once with Syrian representatives at B'abda Palace in Beirut to discuss the question of Lebanon. At the same time, negotiations would resume between Israel and Syria at Wye Plantation in the United States on all other issues, including the Golan. This proposal, which is based on dual-track negotiations with Syria, is aimed at convincing the Syrians that the idea of discussing the question of Lebanon is not a trick to take the edge off the peace negotiations between the two countries.

Mordekhay presented it to Dennis Ross, but the U.S. peace coordinator cast doubts on its chances. The prime minister and the defense minister apparently did not despair in the wake of the categorical Syrian rejection and Israeli intelligence assessments saying there is no chance in the world that al-Asad will agree to discuss the question of Lebanon as a confidence-building measure, and they continue to promote every possible variation of the idea.

As for south Lebanon, officials in Jerusalem today continued their efforts to dispel the hysteria over reports that Hizballah may have long-range katyushas. Security sources doubt that the Syrians want Hizballah to acquire such weapons, while the prime minister said there is no certainty that Hizballah has such katyushas, and sent a firm message to Hizballah members in Lebanon.

[Begin Netanyahu recording] Whoever uses such weapons or, what is more, whoever plans to fire on the northern settlements and the Galilee should know that retribution will be many times harsher. I do not suggest that anyone should think that this government will sit idly by in the face of such threats, and I think those who should get this message will get it loud and clear. [end recording]

[Segal] The practical significance of this threat has been discussed five times in inner cabinet sessions. Security sources assert that the warnings definitely have practical backing in the field.

Israel: Netanyahu Will Not Recognize Unsigned Understanding With Syria

TA1608080996 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 16 Aug 96 p A1

[Report by Ze'ev Schiff]

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel has informed the U.S. Administration that it does not intend to recognize the understanding reached by the Israeli and Syrian delegations during Yitzhaq Rabin's term to the effect that the security arrangements in the Golan would be decided after an Israeli withdrawal. The understanding was reached through U.S. mediation and was formulated in a document that neither party signed.

Legal experts disagree as to whether the unsigned understanding is binding on the sides. That is why the document was called a non-paper [last two words in English], a term used by negotiators when referring to understandings or positions that the other side does not consider binding.

The Netanyahu government adopted the position that an unsigned document is not binding. Opponents point to numerous unsigned understandings that are binding, such as those reached after Operation Grapes of Wrath and Operation Accountability. Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu is on record as saying that his government will honor all the agreements signed by previous governments. At the same time, he pointed out that he sees no obligation to honor verbal promises or understandings made by previous prime ministers (Rabin and Peres) to the Syrians and the Palestinians. This means that the government considers the principles pertaining to the security arrangements a promise that is not binding on it.

The understanding was reached after intense mediation efforts by the U.S. team. The documents stresses the principle of reciprocity to be applied in all the security arrangements. The Syrians initially demanded to apply the principle of symmetry; namely, if a 50-km area from the border is demilitarized on the Syrian side Israel would be required to do likewise in the Hula Valley and the Galilee. Israel objected to this demand, and ultimately it was decided to accept only the principle of reciprocity.

The document also mentions that consideration should be given to the geographical conditions on both sides of the border, from which the Israeli negotiating team inferred that the demilitarization on the Israeli side would apply to a far smaller area, as was the case in the agreement between Israel and Egypt. In the talks the Syrians mentioned a 6:10 ratio between the kilometers demilitarized on their side and on the Israeli side. These numbers do not appear in the document.

Israel: IDF To Formulate 'Active Operational Concept' in Lebanon

TA1608074996 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 16 Aug 96 pp A1, A10

[Report by Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The government will not change Israel's security policy in Lebanon as long as there is no political arrangement, but will instruct the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] to formulate an active operational concept. This decision was made in deliberations held over the past few weeks by Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu on the policy pertaining to the northern border. The new concept will be based on two elements:

— Increasing the number of IDF-initiated operations against Hizballah, including undercover activities and infiltrations beyond the security zone.

— Expanding the targets of reprisal in the event of an escalation in the activities against the IDF or a katyusha attack on the northern settlements.

Senior political sources said yesterday that a change is already discernible in the IDF's activities in Lebanon. According to them, "there are far more operations initiated by us, and there are results: In the last six weeks four squads were eliminated and 11 to 14 terrorists were killed, while we lost only one soldier." The sources emphasized: "The basic policy will not change, but new ideas may emerge concerning the response to possible developments."

During a tour of the north two days ago Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay presented the response policy whereby "Lebanon and anybody else on Lebanese soil who attacks our forces or Israeli territory will bear the consequences." [passage omitted]

Next week Netanyahu will hold another meeting in which detailed plans about possible IDF responses will be raised. Assessments about the situation in Lebanon and various options were presented in five earlier sessions, which were attended by senior ministers. Security sources voiced their reservations about a unilateral withdrawal, and it was decided that Israel will continue to control the security zone.

Netanyahu decided to keep raising the "Lebanon First" plan." In his opinion, this can do Israel no harm seeing that there are two alternatives: Either Syria will agree to enter negotiations about an Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon and security arrangements or it will be portrayed as forcing Israel to go on occupying Arab land in Lebanon. [passage omitted]

Israel: Complaint Lodged With Monitoring Group; UNIFIL on Situation

TA1508161596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1400 GMT 15 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Israel has filed a complaint today to the five-nation group monitoring the Lebanon cease-fire. It's the first violation raised since the establishment of the group. In the complaint, Israel protested that Hizballah ambushed and killed a Lebanese civilian earlier this week. Israel also complained that during the ambush shells were fired from a mortar position set up in a school. The group, consisting of Israel, Lebanon, Syria, the U.S., and France, met for the second time at al-Naqurah in south Lebanon.

Despite the recent attack, UNIFIL [UN Interim Force in Lebanon] spokesman Timor Goksel told Yishay Eldar that the general situation in south Lebanon is relatively quiet.

[Begin recording] [Goksel] There are attacks almost on a daily basis mostly against the SLA [South Lebanese Army] positions, but not at the pace of pre-April, let's say. We are down to about one or two attacks a day, which is not very high compared to the old times here. So I would think that overall the level of violence in south Lebanon has really gone down. There might be several reasons for that. I think that one of the main reasons is the approaching Lebanese national elections, which is occupying everybody in Lebanon at the moment, and I don't think anybody....[pauses] All the parties involved in the Lebanese elections — of which Hizballah is one — I think they will not like to see a major escalation in Lebanon at the moment. So I think that contributes to the overall decline in the level of activities in south Lebanon.

[Eldar] Has UNIFIL heard anything concerning reports of a Hizballah arms buildup in the villages, including reports of 40-kms range katyusha rockets?

[Goksel] No, nothing specifically like that, but I mean we are certainly aware that even in the times of the April confrontation the Hizballah leadership had announced that they have new weapons that they have not used and they have improved long-range weapons, without any specific information, naturally. But they had announced that way back in April, so I don't know why all of a sudden there is this eruption of wandering, or at least amazement, about old things that they had announced on the record themselves. In fact the Hizballah chief Shaykh Nasrallah himself went on record in an interview I recall very vividly that they have some such weapons, and they will use it when the time comes. But there is no specific information of the numbers that we keep hearing from the Israeli news media, or the types. However, one can only assume — and I think that would be a safe bet — to think that in the days immediately after the end of the confrontation, which was about 26-27 April, in all that crowd returning from Beirut — hundreds of thousands of people coming back with every conceivable transport, including trucks and pickup trucks and what have you and a lot of household items and equipment, with no checks whatever even by the Lebanese authorities on the roads — it was very easy in those days to move those weaponry back into south Lebanon, and we think most of those weapons came in fact just immediately few days after the end of the confrontation in April. But I cannot give you any numbers, we don't have that information. [end recording]

Israel: Delegation Head Satisfied With ILMG Reaction to Complaint

TA1508190196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1800 GMT 15 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israel-Lebanon Monitoring Group [ILMG] convened today at UNIFIL [UN Interim Force in Lebanon] headquarters in al-Naqurah to discuss Israel's complaint about Hizballah's attack two days ago, during which a Lebanese civilian was killed and the terrorists fired mortar shells from a village. The members of group emphasized the need to protect civilians.

Brigadier General David Tzur, the head of the Israeli delegation, expressed satisfaction with the group's reaction. This is reported by our correspondents Karmela Menashe and Ilan Ro'e.

Israel: Netanyahu, Ministers Discuss Hebron, Postpone Decision

TA1608075296 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 16 Aug 96 p 2

[Report by Yo'av Limor and Yosi Levi]

[FBIS Translated Text] Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay last night presented for the first time his plan for an IDF [Israel Defense Forces] withdrawal from Hebron before a forum of ministers. At a meeting next week Mordekhay will discuss the redeployment issue with Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasir 'Arafat.

The discussion, which was held at Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's bureau, was attended by Ministers Ari'el Sharon, Refa'el Eytan, Dan Meridor, and Yitzhaq Levi, as well as senior prime minister advisers Dore Gold and Dani Nave.

The plan presented by Mordekhay is based mostly on the original IDF withdrawal plan drafted by the Labor government. Nonetheless, the plan contains several substantial changes designed to enhance the security of the Jewish residents. The changes include the expansion of the Jewish stronghold in Hebron, the enlargement of the area Israel is to retain, and the fleshing out of the Jewish settlement in the city.

The plan further proposes to increase the number of Israeli observation points overlooking problematic areas of Hebron, limit the number of armed Palestinians in areas adjacent to the divide line, and grant Israel the right to enter PA territory in hot pursuit of terrorists.

The military government building currently housing the brigade headquarters, which the Palestinians view as a symbol of the occupation, will be evacuated. The IDF will move its main headquarters to southern Hebron, and troops will depart on operational activities and patrols from that base. The IDF will retain exclusive control of and defense responsibility for the area inhabited by the settlers. In the wake of settlers' demands, the plan proposes to create a security corridor between the Jewish settlement in Hebron and Qiryat Arba'.

A number of reservations were recorded in the course of the meeting, most notably on the part of Agriculture Minister Refa'el Eytan. Yitzhaq Levi also announced his apprehensions regarding the Jewish settlers' future. The defense minister assured him that action to ensure their safety will be greatly increased, including enhanced joint IDF-Palestinian Police patrols. Netanyahu and Meridor supported the proposed plan, while Sharon sought "clarifications" on several problematic issues.

After a session of about two hours, the ministers decided to continue the discussion on 18 August. As soon as the prime minister's "kitchen" completes the discussions on the issue, the defense minister will meet with 'Arafat and launch negotiations on the Hebron redeployment. The Palestinians will be offered a number of "boons," including a further easing of the closure on the territories, in a bid to facilitate their decision to accept the changes Israel will demand.

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu said yesterday that "the redeployment in Hebron is not just the State of Israel's interest; it is also a preeminent interest of the PA and of 'Arafat."

Netanyahu added that "we have no intention of evacuating Hebron; we mean to stay there. Hebron is the most ancient Jewish site in the world. The agenda, therefore, is not the evacuation of Hebron's Jewish settlement, but rather an agreement that will permit coexistence. If there is no security in Hebron, if tragedy or bloodshed take place, God forbid, it will not be dangerous for the Jews only, it will be a threat to the entire peace process."

Eliyahu Suissa of SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim], the interior and religious affairs minister, said yesterday that "any decision on Hebron will have to be brought before Rabbi 'Ovadya Yosef and the Rabbinical Council." He added that the decision on Hebron is crucial to the point of "life or death." Suissa said that "agreements naturally have to be honored, but the Jewish residents' safety should be safeguarded in any event."

[Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew on 16 August carries a similar report by Aluf Ben and Eytan Rabin on page A5, adding: "A defense element said last night that if the Palestinians accept Mordekhay's plan, the minister may decide on redeployment as soon as he meets with 'Arafat next week. The element estimated that the PA chairman will reject the plan, because he will refuse to agree to an IDF presence in Hebron. He noted, however, that greater Israeli flexibility in other matters may pave the way for a compromise and permit an IDF presence, mainly in joint patrols."

[A related report by Ilana Baum, Nehama Dowek, and Roni Shaqed on page 5 of Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew on 16 August adds that Netanyahu and the ministers "vacillate between two proposals. The first one, which is promoted by Minister Arik Sharon, says Israel should retain the right to enter Hebron at any time, and not merely for 'hot pursuit.'" "Sharon is against joint Israeli-Palestinian patrols on the road used by worshipers, arguing that the IDF should have exclusive responsibility for security.

["Under the second proposal, supported by Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay, the Jewish settlement area in the city will be demarcated as Area B," "while all the other city areas would lie under Palestinian security jurisdiction. This proposal suggests territorial contiguity between the Hebron and Qiryat Arba' Jewish settlements." "Contrary to Sharon, Mordekhay believes the army should enter Palestinian areas only for the purpose of 'hot pursuit.' Both proposals require more troops in the city and an unhurried implementation of the redeployment, including the changes."]

Israel: Al-Rujub's Service Said Behind Jordanian Weapon Smuggling

TA1608115796 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 16 Aug 96 p 3

[Report by Bill Hutman]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A gang of Palestinian smugglers managed to outfox the army and police for at least a year and bring weapons and ammunition from Jordan to the Palestinian Authority [PA], police investigators have discovered.

The smugglers brought the goods from Jordan by crossing the Dead Sea in motorized rafts. Six of the rafts were found in a police bust last month in the smugglers' homes in the Hebron area and east Jerusalem.

On Wednesday [14 August], the Jerusalem Magistrate's Court lifted a ban on publication of details of the case. Senior police sources said they were upset the ban was lifted because it will hurt the continuation of the investigation and possibly their ability to locate other suspects.

"We are talking about a serious breach of our borders," said a senior investigator, Chief Superintendent Rahamim Tuval of the Judaea and Samaria District. "Who knows what else they or others managed to smuggle into the country.

"We may not just be dealing with weapons, but also terrorists," Tuval said. He said the Dead Sea route was also probably used to bring illicit drugs into the country.

Eleven gang members, including two women, were detained in the police bust on July 23. Most members were of the 'Aramin family, and were not connected to any terror group but criminally motivated, according to Tuval.

Some 55,000 Jordanian dinars and $45,000 were found during the police raid of homes in the al-Za'im and al-Tur neighborhoods of east Jerusalem, and Si'ir village near Hebron. Two pistols, ammunition, false Israeli identity cards, and a pipe bomb in the making were also discovered in the homes.

Police also found a document that links the PA with the gang, and includes a list of weapons and ammunition the PA received from the smugglers, according to Tuval. He said the list includes machine guns, but declined to give more details.

Sources close to the case said Israel has contacted the Jordanian authorities for help in the investigation. Six of the suspects were remanded until the end of the hearings, while five were released on bail.

[A similar report by Sami Sokol and Eytan Rabin on page A5 of Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew on 16 August adds that the police claim "the weapons were commissioned by the Preventive Security Service in Jericho, commanded by Jibril al-Rujub." The report further states that the "suspected gang leader is 'Umar Sa'ir 'Aramin, a former Shin Bet agent, who was rehabilitated by the service, lives in the al-Tur neighborhood of East Jerusalem, and holds an Israeli identity card." Two of his "accomplices" were Palestinian policemen. A "senior police official" is quoted as saying that "the PA is taking advantage of loopholes in the agreement. The smuggling was originated by senior officials in the Palestinian police and security service."

["The defense establishment takes a grave view of such collaboration between Palestinian security officials and terrorist elements."]

Jordan: Turkish Justice Minister Says Permit Not Needed To Start Trade With Iraq

TA1608090596 Ankara TRT Television Network in Turkish 2100 GMT 15 Aug 96

[Kandemir Alpan video report from Amman]

[FBIS Translated Text] Justice Minister Sevket Kazan has declared that following its application to activate Article 50 of the UN charter, Turkey will wait for a reasonable period and then resume its commercial ties with Iraq. Kazan, National Education Minister Mehmet Saglam, and the delegation accompanying them concluded their official visit to Iraq and proceeded to Jordan. TRT correspondent Kandemir Alpan reports from Amman:

[Begin recording] [Alpan] Kazan, Saglam, and the delegation accompanying them concluded their official visit to Iraq and proceeded by land to Amman. In a statement to Turkish journalists en route to Amman, Kazan reported that his visit to Iraq was extremely successful and the talks in Baghdad were conducted in a sincere atmosphere. Kazan said that he was told that the love and respect shown to the Turkish delegation was not displayed toward any delegation since the Gulf war. Kazan added: The hurt caused as a result of the bombing of Iraq by planes taking off from Incirlik base has thus been eliminated.

Kazan recalled that Turkey applied to the United Nations and, being the country that has incurred the biggest losses from the embargo imposed on Iraq, asked to be exempt from this embargo. Kazan explained that Jordan also made such an application in the recent past and, after waiting for a reasonable period, started trading oil in exchange for goods with Iraq as though it received a positive response to its application. Kazan added that the volume of trade between Jordan and Iraq has now reached $400 million.

[Kazan] Although Turkey incurred more damages than Jordan, it did not make such an application until now. Following the establishment of the new government, Turkey submitted this application on 5 August. The Iraqi officials now tell us the following: In line with the procedures regarding Jordan, there is no reason for you to wait for a permit from the UN Security Council. Your application is sufficient. You may want to wait for some time following the application, but after that there is nothing stopping us from activating Article 50 between the two countries. They are totally justified in this regard. Consequently, Article 50 will be activated between Turkey and Iraq, and the two countries will try to alleviate their economic difficulties to a large extent.

[Alpan] The justice minister declared that the border trade between the two countries will gain importance in this context, announcing that a second and, if necessary, a third border gate will be opened in Habur. Pointing out that Turkey will also undertake initiatives with the United Nations in order to lift the embargo imposed on Iraq, Kazan revealed that the delegations of the two countries will meet soon on the subject of the struggle against the terror originating from northern Iraq.

Recalling that there are 14 Turkish convicts currently incarcerated in the (al-Garib) prison in Iraq, Kazan stated that an official request will be submitted for a prisoner exchange between the two countries. The Turkish delegation will leave Amman tomorrow morning to fly back to Turkey. [end recording]

Syria: Israeli Settlement Drive 'Stabs' Peace Process in 'Heart'

JN1508142896 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 15 Aug 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dear listeners: The Arab arena is currently witnessing a flurry of political activity to reinforce the resolutions of the recent Arab summit in Cairo. In this context, President Hafiz al-Asad sent letters to the leaders of Algeria, Morocco, and Lebanon. The letters were delivered by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar'.

At a news conference he held after he met President al-Hirawi in Beirut, al-Shar' spoke about Israel's maneuvers to deadlock the peace process. As part of its persistent efforts to obstruct this process, Israel yesterday dealt a severe blow to it by canceling a freeze on settlement activity in the occupied Arab territories. It is common knowledge that the decision to freeze settlement activity is an indivisible part of the peace process. By doing this, the current Israeli Government has disavowed the commitments made by the former government to some Arab parties and even to the United States. The former U.S. Administration offered Israel loan guarantees totaling $10 billion in return for freezing settlement activity and to encourage the Israeli Government to proceed with the peace process.

If this is the case, as confirmed by the Israeli Government's cancellation of the freeze on settlements, then how can one be sure about any agreement concluded by this government or about any claim that it wants peace? The Netanyahu government's decision to re-launch the settlement conspiracy stabs the peace process in the heart. This is because peace can only be based on ending Israeli occupation in all its forms.

All this is not surprising. What is surprising, however, is that Netanyahu—who rejected withdrawal from the occupied territories, refused to halt settlement activity, insisted on Judaizing occupied Jerusalem, and said there is nothing in Security Council resolutions that obliges Israel to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories and that these resolutions ensure Israel's security, as he claims — finds it strange that Syria and Lebanon should reject his so-called Lebanon-First proposal. In other words, the head of the Israeli Government has the nerve to say that it is strange that Syria and Lebanon should reject his maneuver to separate the unified stand of the two fraternal Arab countries and to disengage the Syrian and Lebanese tracks in the peace process.

By claiming that he finds this strange, the head of the Israeli Government supposes that the world public has forgotten that Israel is required to withdraw from southern Lebanon, in accordance with Security Council Resolution 425, and that similar Israeli plans have been defeated by Lebanon's willpower, such as the 17 May agreement. The head of the Israeli Government has also forgotten, or pretended to have forgotten, that world public opinion is fully acquainted with the unified Syrian-Lebanese position through consistent stands that reflect coordination, consultations, and a unified Syrian-Lebanese view that corresponds with the resolutions of international legitimacy.

It is very obvious that this Israeli proposal is bound to fail. However, there is no harm in citing an opinion of this proposal. Former Israeli prime minister Shim'on Peres said the proposal is funny. Peres wondered about the value of a formula that includes Lebanon and excludes Syria or one that includes Syria and excludes the Golan Heights. This means that the former Israeli prime minister is ridiculing any attempt to separate the Syrian and Lebanese tracks. He also asserts that peace is impossible without Israel's withdrawal from the Golan.

In light of this statement and the international positions declared by the U.S. Administration, the EU, Russia, and all other nations that adopted the land-for-peace principle, we don't know whether the head of the Israeli Government still finds it strange that Syria and Lebanon have rejected his proposals that contain all the necessary elements for destroying the peace process.

The Syrian position is very clear for anyone who wants peace. Syria has repeatedly declared this position. President Hafiz al-Asad said at the Alexandria summit a week ago that Syria is willing to pick up where the peace talks have left off, based on the same Madrid principles, the Security Council resolutions, and the land-for-peace principle.

Syria: AL-BA'TH Lashes at U.S. 'Terrorist' Policy, D'Amato Law

JN1608092096 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0715 GMT 16 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 16 Aug (SANA) — The newspaper AL-BA'TH asserts that the provocative, unilateral, and parochial cowboy mentality with which the United States is dealing with the rest of the world might have been valid in a certain era and under extraordinary conditions. However, the paper adds, this mentality is absolutely invalid and unacceptable in the late 20th Century, which is supposedly the age of human rights, justice, and equality.

In an article in the "With the Events" column, the newspaper says: After the downfall of the Soviet Union, the United States assumed international leadership. It started to pursue an international policy which at the least is terrorist and repressive. This policy relies on applying pressure on and blackmailing countries whose policies clash with its own, in order to force them to cave in and submit to its will. This is what happened with Cuba, the DPRK, Iran, and Libya, as well as every country that says no to America.

It adds: The D'Amato law, which stipulates imposing sanctions against Libya and Iran, is more proof of the new U.S. policy. The repercussions of this law are not restricted to the two countries that are the subject of U.S. enmity. On the contrary, it affects the rest of the world. This fact triggered the dissatisfaction and denunciation of the entire world, especially Western Europe and Japan. If anything, this indicates that the world has grown impatient with America's foreign policy, which lacks balance and legitimacy and is based on blackmail, partiality, and terrorism.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Rabbani Congratulates Pakistan on Independence Day

LD1508152696 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 14 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Esteemed Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan [ISA], sent the following telegram of congratulations to Pakistan on the occasion of that country's independence day. It was addressed to the president of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan:

His Excellency Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari, president of the Islamic State of Pakistan, may peace and the blessings of God be upon you [preceding words said in Arabic], I am glad to have the opportunity to convey to you, to the government, and to the people of the friendly and fraternal country of Pakistan, my best wishes and congratulations on behalf of the ISA, the people of Afghanistan, and myself on the occasion of the 49th anniversary of Pakistan's independence. We share the happiness and pleasure of our Pakistani brethren in marking this great day.

I have heard a report on the recent visit to Islamabad by a high-ranking Afghan delegation. I am glad to assess the results of the talks and meetings as a positive step toward the revival of confidence and for the restoration of friendly and fraternal relations.

On the basis of Islamic brotherhood, good neighborly relations and mutual endeavors, I believe a new chapter can be opened in relations between our two countries.

I assure your excellency of Afghanistan's interest and determination regarding the improvement of relations with the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the restoration of mutual confidence that is in the interests of the people of both countries, and of peace and stability in the region.

I renew my best wishes for your good health and prosperity as well as for the progress and prosperity of the friendly people of Pakistan.

Afghanistan: Foreign Ministry Agrees To Meeting With Russia, Tajikistan

LD1508084196 Mashhad Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Persian 1600 GMT 13 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic State of Afghanistan has agreed with the proposal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation to organize a trilateral meeting with Tajikistan to consider the existing crisis on the Afghan-Tajik border. In its response to the memorandum from the Russian Federation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan hailed this proposal and issued a statement on Monday [12 August] evening, asking for the date and venue of the meeting on the political dispute. In this statement the Islamic State of Afghanistan denied it had given support to the opposition forces of the state of Tajikistan and announced that the crisis in Tajikistan is that country's internal affair and can be settled by the conflicting sides by sensible approaches to the matter on their part.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan also considers that by starting religious, cultural, historical, and related links with the country [Tajikistan] we will promote the expansion of Kabul-Dushanbe relations, which will serve to consolidate peace in the area.

The states of Tajikistan and Russia recently reiterated their accusation that the state of Afghanistan and some existing groups in that country were interfering in the internal affairs of Tajikistan and supporting opposition groups, and Kabul has denied these accusations several times.

Afghanistan: IRNA—Taleban Attack in Southeast Repelled

LD1508162896 Tehran IRNA in English 1426 GMT 15 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kabul, 15 Aug (IRNA) — Battles between the Taleban forces and Afghan Government troops are still in progress in Paktia and Paktika Provinces around the district of Khowst. Moreover, a Taleban attack has been repelled after resistance by the Mojahedin forces.

A source in Golboddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party] told an IRNA correspondent in Kabul today: Mulla Borjan, a member of the Taleban leadership council, was leading the Taleban offensive, whose main objective was the complete disarming of the Mojahedin forces who are mainly made up of Hezb-e Eslami members.

According to this source, the resumption of new battles by the Taleban in southeast Afghanistan has given rise to protests by local people. For this reason, they have sent a number of representatives to Kandahar, the political headquarters of the Taleban, for talks with the group's leadership about an immediate halt to the fighting.

There has been no report on the casualties of the recent battle, which is still in progress. [passage omitted]

Afghanistan: Taleban Group Joins Government Forces in Vardak Province

LD1508183196 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 15 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A Taleban commander, along with 40 armed men, joined the Mojahedin in Vardak Province. Reports received by BAKHTAR say that Mola 'Ali Mohammad, who had been operating in Vardak Province for the Taleban group, has abandoned his previous allegiance and joined the mojahedin in this province.

On behalf of his men, this commander pledged to fight henceforth on the side of the government forces. [words indistinct] These fighters were equiped with light and heavy weapons.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: Prime Minister Starts Crackdown on 1975 Coup Leaders

BK1308132896 Hong Kong AFP in English 1304 GMT 13 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dhaka, Aug 13 (AFP) — Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed's government Tuesday [13 August] detained three retired army officers in a crackdown on those involved in Bangladesh's first military coup in which her father was killed.

In a surprise move, police raided the homes of retired Colonels Faruq Rahman and Shahriar and retired Major Khairuzzaman and took them for interrogations, an AFP photographer at the scene reported.

Shahriar has been detained at the downtown Ramna police station and Rahman and Khairuzzaman were taken to a nearby detective office, he said.

Witnesses and photographers said the three were smiling as armed police escorted them to police centres. Journalists were barred from talking to them.

Police said the three were taken into custody under the tough Special Powers Act of 1974 which allows arrest and detention without specific charges or trial.

The detention came two days before the anniversary of the August 15, 1975 coup in which president Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the nation's founding leader and father of Sheikh Hasina, was killed along with most of his family.

Sheikh Hasina and a younger sister were in West Germany during the coup.

The action also follows the dismissal by Sheikh Hasina's Awami League government of some coup leaders who had served in Bangladeshi Missions abroad.

Sheikh Hasina, who returned from self exile in 1981 and vowed to avenge the assassination of her parents, led the Awami League back to power in June parliamentary elections, 21 years after its ouster in the coup.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad reportedly sent out appeals to foreign countries not to provide asylum or shelter to any coup leaders, who have been protected by a constitutional indemnity act blocking any trial.

The indemnity, which is still in force, can only be repealed by a two-thirds majority vote in Bangladesh's 330-seat parliament.

The ruling party and its main ally in parliament, the Jatiya Party of jailed President Hussain Mohammad Ershad, are well short of a two-thirds majority.

Rahman and Shahriar were among the senior-most coup officers still living in Dhaka, while Khairuzzaman was employed in the Bangladesh Mission in Manila but returned home a month ago after being sacked.

Last week, another coup leader — retired Major Bazlul Huda — was reported to be detained in Bangkok after he fled from Dhaka.

The government last month also terminated the services and recalled five other retired army officers involved in the coup who were posted in Bangladesh Embassies by previous governments.

But the five — retired Majors Shariful Huda, Noor Chowdhury, Mohiuddin and Rashed Chowdhury and retired Colonel Abdul Aziz Pasha — reportedly went into hiding.

Most former military officers have publicly denied involvement in the 1975 killings.

There was no immediate statement from the government on its latest move, but informed sources said the predawn arrests sent a clear signal ahead of Thursday's [15 August] anniversary, being observed for the first time at state level, that the new government was determined to bring the "self-confessed killers" to justice — a reference to young coup leaders.

Sheikh Hasina herself is to attend an official function at the grave of her father at Tungipara village home, south of Dhaka, at the start of Thursday's observance aimed at restoring the glory of father and his post-independence regime.

In past years, Awami League observed August 15 as a day of national mourning while its rivals, including the Bangladesh Nationalist Party [BNP] of former Prime

Minister Khaleda Zia and the Freedom Party of the coup leaders, had termed it as a democracy day — a reference to Rahman's 1974 introduction of the much-criticised one-party rule that ended with his assassination.

"There was not much surprise ... it was somehow expected," commented a senior government official on the arrests.

But a BNP official termed the arrests a possible indication of "tougher and maybe repressive" policies Sheikh Hasina's government might adopt against its adversaries to consolidate its return to power after two decades.

Bangladesh: Home Minister Confirms Plot Against Government

BK1608091696 Hong Kong AFP in English 0816 GMT 16 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dhaka, Aug 16 (AFP) — Bangladesh's Home Minister Friday [16 August] confirmed reports that the three arrested leaders of a 1975 coup were behind a plot to assassinate Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed.

Rafiqul Islam told AFP that the three retired army officers were "vigorously interrogated" by security agencies and a hunt was on for other suspects behind what he said was a "conspiracy against the government."

The three retired colonels, Faruq Rahman, Shahriar Rashid and Major Khairuzzaman, were arrested Tuesday [13 August] at their homes in Dhaka

"We have enough proof of some kind of conspiracy against the government, on the basis of which the three were arrested and rigorous efforts are on to arrest other plotters," said Islam, a decorated veteran of Bangladesh's 1971 independence war against Pakistan.

Islam refused to give further details of the plot saying "this is a serious matter and at this stage I can't divulge any other information as the investigation is going on."

Bangladesh: Suicide Squad To Assassinate Prime Minister Arrested

BK1508111396 Hong Kong AFP in English 1057 GMT 15 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dhaka, Aug 15 (AFP) — A suicide squad was supposed to assassinate Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed when she attended an official mourning ceremony for Bangladesh's founding leader in southern Bangladesh Thursday [15 August], a police source said.

A senior police official, who did not want to be named, said three retired army officers, all leaders of a 1975 military coup, were behind the plot.

The three, retired Colonels Faruq Rahman, Shahriar Rashid and Major Khairuzzaman, were arrested Tuesday [13 August] at their homes in Dhaka on the basis of "specific conspiracy charges backed by necessary evidences," he said without giving further details.

Bangladesh: Sub-Continental Tensions Viewed

BK1608031796 Dhaka JANAKANTHA in Bengali 7 Aug 96 p 4

[Editorial: "Problems With Neighbors"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Answering a question in the parliament on 4 August, Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad has said that the Awami League government has taken a bold step to resolve the river water sharing issue with India. In reply to several supplementary questions on the same issue, he said that, in addition to the Farakka dam, there are 54 more issues between Bangladesh and India involving river water sharing. Noting that Bangladesh has many problems with India, he called upon all parties to sit together in the parliament and make a decision so that a forceful initiative can be taken to resolve the Farakka and other issues with India. The foreign minister also disclosed in parliament on that day that Pakistan owes $10 billion, equivalent to 400 billion taka, to Bangladesh. He proposed holding a meeting of all parties represented in the parliament in order to create a consensus in the country regarding all outstanding issues with India and Pakistan.

It goes without saying that these are very important issues. No one needs to be reminded how serious the water sharing problem with India is. There was only a temporary agreement on sharing the Ganges River water at Farakka; no permanent agreement could be reached. The foreign minister has expressed the hope that a permanent agreement will now be concluded. Many negotiations had been held earlier on the Farakka dam and Ganges water sharing. Unfortunately, however, no solution has yet been found to this very serious issue for Bangladesh, despite the passage of such a long time.

The question is why it could not be done. The people of Bangladesh suffered and continue to suffer from natural, economic, and environmental problems as the issue remained unresolved. It is surprising that the issue is still unresolved. Initiatives are being taken in today's world to promote cooperation and good-neighborly relations among countries and to resolve regional and international problems. Countries are now realizing the need for cooperation. Given this situation, it is as regrettable as it is amazing that this problem involving international river water has remained unresolved for years, and no talks have been held to resolve it. The result has been that the lower riparian country of

Bangladesh is scorching due to the lack of water and is facing other hardships.

This is amazing because, despite raising the issue for the umpteenth time, there has been no appropriate response from the Indian Government. After assuming office, the Awami League government expressed the desire to take bold steps toward resolving the water sharing issue with neighboring India. Soon after assuming the responsibility, Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad also expressed the desire to take an early initiative in this regard. Meanwhile, it has been reported recently that the new government in India is also eager to resolve the issues with Bangladesh.

Some work has already been done due to the initiatives taken by the new government in Bangladesh. A meeting was held at the Foreign Ministry a few days ago to discuss the sharing of the Ganges River water at Farakka and of other common river waters. The Indian foreign secretary recently visited Dhaka. Indian External Affairs Minister I.K. Gujral will soon visit Bangladesh. Indian Prime Minister Deve Gowda has also been reported to be eager to resolve the issue. The latest report said that Chief Minister Jyoti Basu of India's West Bengal state has insisted that Gujral resolve the water sharing issue with Bangladesh.

The two countries now have two new governments. It is time now to shun the old approach. It is an opportunity to establish good-neighborly relations in their real sense. Bangladesh never made any unfair demands; nor is it making one now. Bangladesh wants a just solution to this problem. It wants its due share of water, and it has the right to demand this. We hope that the present government of our huge neighbor India will fully cooperate to resolve this problem and will extend a hand of cooperation in the real sense to resolve it.

Like India, Pakistan is also a member of the family of the common forum of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, SAARC. A number of issues relating to that country that have emerged in Bangladesh's history still remain unresolved. The money that Pakistan owes Bangladesh is Bangladesh's legitimate due. It would not be incorrect to say that Pakistan did not show any eagerness in this regard, though it is also true that Bangladesh did not appropriately raise the issue before. Although some initiatives were taken for holding talks before 1975, no progress could be made after that. Pakistan did not show any interest in resolving other issues either. It did not come forward to solve the problem of stranded Pakistanis. New problems such as the harassment of Bengalis living in Pakistan and the forced repatriation of some of them have also surfaced now.

These are real problems for Bangladesh. Pakistan should appropriately respond to solve these problems to uphold morality and in the interest of strengthening total peace and cordiality in this region. We welcome the initiatives that the Government of Bangladesh has already taken and is going to take and assert that problems with India and Pakistan need to be resolved. It is in the interest of the whole country. The government should move forward in this regard. Simultaneously, everyone should extend cooperation in this effort.

We believe that the proposal made by Foreign Minister Azad to take into confidence all the parties and opposition parties of the parliament to resolve the problems with India and Pakistan and to make a decision on it on the basis of consensus, if necessary in a closed-door session, is a very important proposal in the national interest. Countrymen hope that there will be progress in this regard and a decision will be made on the basis of consensus to resolve the pending problems with two SAARC member countries. The countrymen hope that everyone will extend his hand of cooperation toward this end.

India

India: Iranian Support Over CTBT Seen as Possible 'Liability'

BK1508005796 Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English 14 Aug 96 p 4

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Iran today supported India's stand on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), a move which may prove to be more of a liability than an asset.

The Iranian foreign minister, Mr Ali Akbar Vilayeti, wrote to his Indian counterpart, Mr Inder Kumar Gujral, expressing solidarity with India on the treaty.

In his letter, Mr Vilayeti said like New Delhi, Teheran too, believed the treaty was "not an end" but "a means to achieve" nuclear disarmament.

In Geneva yesterday, the Iranian delegate, Mr Hamid Baidi Nejad, threatened to block the treaty's draft text unless his country's concerns were taken care of. "We have three concerns and if these are not addressed, we cannot allow the text to go further," he said.

However, the Iranian foreign minister today made it clear that Teheran would follow New Delhi's stand on the test ban treaty. "We believe the CTBT draft should reflect a final nuclear disarmament within a time-bound framework. This commitment should be rigidly implemented by all nuclear countries in order to achieve global security and an atmosphere of trust and cooperation in different parts of the world," the letter said.

Officials here expressed happiness over the Iranian minister's letter which, they felt, vindicated India's stand on the test ban treaty. New Delhi, which nuclear nations are trying to isolate on the issue has been arguing that its opposition to the treaty's text is shared by many developing nations. But so far, Iran has been the only country to openly support India.

However, India's decision to congratulate itself on Iran's support may prove embarrassing in the long run. Iran, along with Iraq and Libya, is considered to be a "rogue state" by the United States and other Western nations.

The move may be a shrewd one from Teheran's point of view, as it hopes to gain legitimacy by aligning with New Delhi on the treaty. But the solidarity shown by it may prove costly for New Delhi.

The Clinton Administration has so far tried to persuade India to give up its "intransigent" stand and not block the treaty. But Iran's support may now intensify the pressure and force India to sign the treaty.

In his letter, Mr Vilayeti said Iran had been keen to sign the treaty and had therefore, enthusiastically taken part in the disarmament negotiations at Geneva. But following New Delhi's opposition, Teheran had studied the "discriminatory" provisions in the text of the treaty and decided to oppose them, he said.

"Terminating the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons should be considered part of the treaty which would be a step towards nuclear disarmament," Mr Vilayeti said. This was one reason why non-nuclear nations had renounced their right to the nuclear option, he added.

However, "this decision of non-nuclear nations should not be misconstrued as a legitimate right to possess nuclear weapons" by nuclear powers, he said.

Two years ago, when the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty came up for indefinite extension, New Delhi opposed it. Teheran, which was one of the signatories now appears to be regretting the decision.

"We signed the indefinite extension of the non-proliferation treaty so that elimination of nuclear weapons would be pursued," Mr Vilayeti said. He expressed disappointment that so far nothing had been done in this direction.

India: Need For India To Declare Nuclear Status Viewed

BK1408142496 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English 14 Aug 96 p 13

[Article by Rakshat Pur: "Another Approach to CTBT"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] There is of course much to commend in the firmness that Foreign Minister Inder Gujral and his colleagues as well as Opposition leaders have shown in the face of American persuasion and pressure on India to sign the present draft of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty [CTBT]. But there does need to be something more said and done now than to repeat ad nauseam the old and worn-out phrase about "keeping nuclear options open". Something has to be said and done that would enable Delhi to introduce a change in the situation to its own advantage and would trigger rethinking among the major powers.

Some Opposition leaders and also some of Gujral's colleagues have called again and again for India's exploding a nuclear device to send home the message that Delhi cannot be trifled with. This suggestion is no less a cliche than repeating parrot-like that India is firm about keeping its nuclear options open. There however is another way out of the impasse that has developed.

That way is for Delhi — which exploded a nuclear device in 1974 — to declare unambiguously that India, while wedded to international peace, is a nuclear-weapons state like the five privileged nuclear powers and that it reserves the right to acquire, improve and augment nuclear weapons and devices as and when it considers this necessary. The question of whether it will or will not explode a nuclear device must be decided according to circumstances. Delhi could of course eventually sign a CTBT agreement depending on whether other means, such as computer-simulation, were available or made available to it for regular improvement and augmentation of its arsenal. It should not matter if to begin with the arsenal is notional.

If and when India declares unambiguously its nuclear-weapons status a number of commentators in the major nuclear-weapons countries will cry, "Didn't tell you." But thought of this need not deter Delhi. All the powers have indulged in the kind of self interested change in tack that is suggested here. Also, Pakistan built up clandestinely with smuggled material a nuclear complex, and the western countries have accepted the fact without too much demuring. China has been giving Pakistan illegally at "friendship prices" nuclear equipment, missiles and other military material which seems intended to keep South Asia divided. The US administration has publicly expressed vague displeasure but privately winked at Beijing's moves. So there should be no harm in Delhi's demonstrating that more than one can play at this kind of game.

India might also re-emphasise that its security concerns dictate a nuclear-weapons status. There is of course, as indicated, the offensive Chinese use of Pakistan to keep South Asia tense and divided, which does not seem to worry the US and other major powers but which is and ought to be among India's prime concerns. There are however also other factors that impinge on India's security. There is, first, China's direct threat to India, with southward pointing missiles deployed in occupied Tibet. Secondly, there are the nuclear arsenals of the privileged powers which can rest on a farcical NPT [Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty] for perpetual sway over world affairs. In this situation, there ought to be no hesitation in Delhi to declare that India is a nuclear-weapons state.

The immediate as well as eventual effects of such a declaration would of course remain to be seen. But the US and its nuclear friends may have to reconsider certain matters in the CTBT draft. It should not thereafter be possible to categorise India as one of the 'threshold' nuclear states. Then, there is the likelihood that Islamabad, which seems usually to base decisions on such matters on what Delhi does, would be led into also declaring itself to be a nuclear state and reserving to itself the same kind of options. That would leave Israel which usually shakes its head but winks a yes when a question is asked about its nuclear status. It has in any case agreed with the US to sign the CTBT draft as it stands.

Gujral is reported to have said that India will not sign the present draft but will not stand in the way of others signing it. The draft has an 'entry-into-force' provision which could subsequently create difficulties for India even if Delhi abstains from signing it now. From available accounts it seems that if the CTBT treaty in its present form is not ratified after the stipulated period of three years certain provisions can be invoked regardless of India's abstaining which would restrict its freedom of action.

In view of all this, it seems obvious that the most advantageous course for Delhi might be to declare that India is a nuclear weapons state and that it reserves the right to acquire, improve and augment nuclear weapons. If India did eventually decide to sign the present CTBT, it would do so as an equal and with as much right to nuclear weaponry as the privileged five.

As for commentators in newspapers such as the Washington Post, which has been carrying derogatory and vilifying remarks about India and calling it "the spoiler" because Delhi does not sign on the dotted line to keep itself inferior, secondary and subservient, they are best dismissed out of hand. Too many in the West assume moral superiority where it does not exist.

India: Article on 'Second Best Option' for CTBT

BK1408154096 Madras THE HINDU in English 14 Aug 96 p 10

[Article by Prem Shankar Jha: "India's Second Best Option"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The letter from the U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. Warren Christopher, that was delivered to the Indian Foreign Minister, Mr. I.K. Gujral, on Thursday, August 9, has put the Indian Government on the horns of the worst dilemma that it has ever faced in the realm of foreign policy. So long as the U.S. was going along wholeheartedly with the entry into force clause introduced into the CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty] by Britain, China and Russia, the Government had no option but to declare that India would not be coerced into signing the treaty and would block its opening for signature at the U.N.. But Mr. Christopher's letter has, for the first time, seriously opened up another possibility: this is to refuse to sign the treaty, and receive strong assurance that this will not invite coercive sanctions at some point in the future, in exchange for not blocking the treaty.

Mr. Christopher's letter contains a categorical assurance that while, for the reasons he pointed out to Mr. Gujral in Jakarta, it is not possible to change the language of the draft Treaty now, the U.S. would like to give an unambiguous assurance that it does not view Article XIV para 2 of the draft treaty, as giving a CTBT Review Conference to be held four to five years from now, the right to impose any coercive international sanctions to force India or any other hold outs to sign the treaty. Mr. Christopher said that the U.S. was prepared to formalise this assurance in an exchange of diplomatic notes or any other form that the Indian Government desired. The offending part of Article XIV to which India took such strong exception was, "If this Treaty has not entered into force three years after the date of the anniversary of its opening for signature, the Depositary (i.e. the U.N.) shall convene a Conference of the States that have already deposited their instruments of ratification to consider and decide by consensus what means, consistent with international law, may be undertaken to accelerate the ratification process in order to facilitate the early entry into force of this Treaty. "Mr. Christopher's letter needs to be seen in the context of what has now been the known U.S. position on India not signing the CTBT for some time as well as some of the clarifications that the U.S. ambassador gave to Mr. Gujral when he presented the letter to him. The U.S. position has been that it will not take it amiss and will not allow it to affect bilateral relations if India does not sign the treaty. All that it is asking is that India find some way of allowing the treaty to go to the U.N. for signature and thus bring to a fruition the past year's work in Geneva. During his discussion with Mr. Gujral, Mr. Wisner informed him that the U.S. was prepared to put its weight behind getting the President of the disarmament conference, Mr. Jaap Ramaker of the Netherlands, to issue a formal statement to go with the treaty, that Article XIV(2) excludes the employment of coercive sanctions to obtain the signature of the nuclear threshold States. He also made it clear that if the U.S. gives a formal assurance in a diplomatic communication to India that it interprets Article XIV (2) as permitting only non-coercive sanctions, then it will consider itself bound by this assurance in all future review conferences. The sum of these three positions adds up to a significant gain for India. Mr. Christopher has in effect offered that if India does not vote against the treaty, then five years of unrelenting effort by the U.S. first to press India into signing the NPT [Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty] and then into formally renouncing its right to test nuclear weapons, will come to an end. India will in effect be accepted as a nuclear capable power, and will attract censure only if it continues nuclear testing to develop more sophisticated nuclear weapons, without being able to demonstrate in the language of the treaty. that "extraordinary events have taken place related to the subject matter of the treaty, that have jeopardised its supreme interests."

The crucial issue is how much credence can one put on a formal assurance on the above lines. Can the U.S. not change its mind, perhaps citing some new domestic legislation, and become a party to the application of sanctions at some future date? While not doubting the sincerity of American assurances now, India's experience with nuclear fuel for the Tarapur atomic power plant in the Seventies, and the second Cray computer in the Eighties, forces one to admit that a future change cannot be ruled out. So long as the entry into force clause remains, future administrations in Washington will not be free of pressure to twist the arms of India and any others that do not sign the CTBT. For one thing, if India does not sign now, there is little likelihood that Pakistan will do so, Israel too may decide to stay out. Since these are also the hold outs against the NPT, there will be a widespread perception that while the CTBT may have limited somewhat the vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons among the existing nuclear powers, it will not have checked horizontal proliferation after all.

This pressure could easily become an annual feature, because para 3 of Article XIV envisages that review meetings for gauging compliance with the entry into force clause will be held every year after the first one. Each of these will become an occasion when various governments, non-governmental organisations, and the media will be able to exert pressure on the contracting parties, to apply coercive sanctions against the holdout States. There is no telling how long a formal commitment sanctified by a letter to the Indian Government will hold against such pressures. India would therefore be within its rights to say, as Mr. Gujral apparently pointed out to Mr. Wisner, that all this can be done much more simply if the entry into force clause is itself dropped. That was the condition India had originally put to not blocking the treaty.

While this would undoubtedly be the best option from India's point of view, the Government would do well to count the costs and benefits that would flow from rejecting the second best option offered by Mr. Christopher. India's veto is not likely to block the proponents from taking it to the U.N. any way to get an endorsement from the General Assembly and open it for ratification. This may be a prolonged process, and there may be a number of amendments, but unless the entry into force clause is drastically altered, the provision for a review conference to be followed by annual conferences will remain. Thus India may still find itself facing Article XIV(2) four years from now, but without any assurances against the use of coercion, and without the tacit acceptance of its nuclear status that is on offer now. On the other hand, a careful assessment of probabilities suggests that the twin commitments offered by the U.S. will be sufficient to virtually eliminate the likelihood of coercive sanctions being applied to India, or other hold outs.

Indian policy makers should not make the mistake of overestimating the scope for coercive sanctions provided by Article XIV (2 and 3) of the draft Treaty. It is not easy, to think of sanctions that are "consistent with international law," that can be applied to a country that has not given and therefore cannot be accused of having broken, any international commitments. Secondly a formal American commitment not to support the use of sanctions against India in a future review conference, backed by a similar clarification of purpose from the President of the Geneva conference, should not be dismissed lightly. The U.S. is a great power and will not lightly jeopardise its credibility. Nor will it want to alienate India unnecessarily.

Much else will have changed to India's advantage in the next five years. Fall goes well the Indian GDP will be almost 50 per cent larger, and its global trade twice as large as it is today. The involvement of foreign investors in the economy will be far greater than it is today. Thus both the desire to apply coercive sanctions, and the impact if they are applied, will be very greatly reduced. The situation in India's neighbourhood too may have changed. It is possible to envisage changes that could make it in India's interest to reassess its stand on the CTBT. One can also envisage changes that will justify its resumption of nuclear testing. Thus both India and the nuclear powers could have new reasons for changing their position further on this issue.

To sum up, while there are no foolproof guarantees that India will not come under pressure on nuclear issues at some point in the future, in a less than certain world, the Christopher option offers it the most that it can reasonably hope to get — a tacit acceptance of its nuclear weapons status; formal assurances against coercion, and freedom from public condemnation abroad — something that one may deplore but cannot ignore. This does not mean that India should not ask for more clearly spelt out assurances that are not strictly bilateral. The best course, if the U.S. is serious, would be to add a line in Article XIV(2) ruling out sanctions or other forms of coercion. Alternately it could ask for a statement from the President of the U.N. General Assembly that "the measures contemplated by a future review conference will be in conformity with accepted diplomatic practice and will not include attempts at coercion in any form."

India: Article Propounds 'Valid Reasons' for Nuclear Testing

BK1408155896 Delhi DAINIK JAGRAN in Hindi 13 Aug 96 p 6

[Article by Dr. Chintamani Mahapatra: "The Inadequate Opposition to the CTBT"]

[FBIS Translated Text] China conducted another nuclear test while the defense ministers' conference of the ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) Regional Forum (ARF) — attended by the United States, Russia, Japan, Canada and India, represented by External Affairs Minister Inder Kumar Gujral — was on, and then immediately announced a moratorium on further nuclear testing from 30th July. This last nuclear test was conducted by China exactly on the eve of the resumption of the UN Disarmament Conference in Geneva.

The statement of the Chinese Government accompanied by the announcement of a moratorium on further nuclear testing is not only a welcome reaction to the appeal made by all the non-nuclear countries but also a solid step towards encouraging the drive for nuclear disarmament. However, it is apparent that having achieved its nuclear aim, Beijing has started to speak in the language used by the Western nuclear powers, especially the United States. Like America, it has also started to pontificate on the nuclear issue in similar tones, advising others to exercise restraint on their nuclear ambitions. Following the Chinese example, the supporters of the U.S. plan through the enforcement of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, CTBT, that is, Canada, Australia, and Japan will surely pressure India to accept the Ramaker Text (original proposal of the CTBT) without raising any question as to the terms and conditions of the CTBT proposal.

What is interesting in the context is the fact that during the ARF conference the argument of these very countries was: "No poor country should worry for its security" (after the enforcement of the CTBT). This assertion, in other words, means that since India is a poor country it has no right to use its nuclear option. May one counter this argument by asking whether England was as affluent as it is now when it had started its nuclear program? Was France also a rich and fully developed country when it too commenced its nuclear program? It may be recalled that these two countries were quite poor when they launched their nuclear programs, being terribly afflicted with the economic ills in the aftermath of the Second World War. When the leaders of these countries started their nuclear programs, they were striving very hard to revive their tottered economies and were totally dependent on the U.S. Marshall Plan. At that time, owing to their being members of NATO, they too, had the guarantee of security under the U.S. nuclear umbrella. Not only this, these so-called supporters of the CTBT must also answer the question whether the Chinese republic was really rich when it made its first nuclear blast in 1964, earning its right of entry into the select nuclear club.

Japan can now quite magnanimously advise all the poor countries to shed their security concerns because through a bilateral security treaty with the United States it enjoys protection under the US nuclear umbrella. Moreover, torn between the domestic constraints and the regional pressures, Tokyo is unable to launch its own nuclear program. Had it not been enjoying the protection of the U.S. nuclear umbrella, would it have maintained its similar attitude to the CTBT and the Nonproliferation Treaty with hostile nuclear neighbors such as China and Russia breathing down its neck? Canada also enjoys similar protection by being not only a member of NATO and the U.S. air security program but also a next door neighbor to the mighty United States.

As far as Australia is concerned, it has no such nagging security concerns. All these countries are well aware of India's security concerns and, hence, its need to retain its nuclear option. There is no doubt that living in a nuclear-free-zone is very much in India's own interest. But is India's security environment free from nuclear hazards? Apart from the highhanded activities of the U.S. naval forces in the Indian Ocean and the frighteningly huge Russian nuclear pile, its neighbor, India also has to cope with two more hostile neighbors: China and Pakistan, which have also become nuclear powers. What adds to India's worries is the close and active nuclear and missile cooperation between China and Pakistan.

It is terribly unjust to pressure India to accept the original text of the CTBT when Pakistan is becoming militarily more menacing (through the U.S. help it is getting under the cover of the Brown Amendment and through the supply of nuclear materials from China including the 5000 ring magnets and the M-11 missiles). Then there is also the fact that China conducted nuclear tests, not caring two hoots for the global protests. How can India ever forgo its nuclear option in the face of these severe threats to its security? Earlier, India used to be silent on China's unbridled nuclear and missile activities, but now it has started to raise its protest directly or indirectly, which is definitely a welcome step. For example, an officer of the Indian External Affairs' Ministry has made the very pertinent comment that: "China's nuclear blasts exposes the hollowness of the proposed CTBT and shows its limitation: that it is in no way comprehensive."

According to a press report, one senior officer in the Indian Defense Ministry has given his considered opinion that: "Looking to the speedy progress that China has made in the nuclear field and the liberal help it has given to Pakistan in the technological sphere, it is imperative for India to fully develop its nuclear capability by all means. These developments make it vital that India become a nuclear power. Following these nuclear explosions by China, India should not delay in conducting the much wanted nuclear test itself." The top strategists of the country are sure to support this official view of the Indian Government. If a plebiscite were held in the country on the deterrent power of the nuclear weapons, most certainly it would get a huge support. As a matter of fact, the present Deve Gowda government has already sent across a firm signal. It has resolutely announced that it won't allow the CTBT proposal to be passed at the Geneva Conference on Disarmament. This is a very welcome announcement as in the past the country had missed many opportunities to resist the nuclear threats squarely and boldly.

Clearly, India has many valid reasons to use its nuclear option now. Having used it, India can also propose to start negotiations with the nuclear powers regarding the CTBT proposal. Or else a nuclear hazard free world would remain only a dream, impossible to be implemented into reality. Before coming up with a proposal to start talks with the nuclear powers concerning disarmament, India must possess some bargaining strength. If the United States took 40 years to explain to the world the urgent need for the CTBT, and France along with China can merrily conduct nuclear tests to fulfill their nuclear needs before the ban on them is imposed, who can prevent India from conducting nuclear tests and then magnanimously declaring a moratorium on further nuclear testing? After all, what did India gain by exercising a monumental self-restraint on its nuclear ambitions after the 1974 nuclear blast in Pokharan? Our strategic needs demand not only opposing the CTBT or staying clear of it but taking some solid steps to ensure our country's security.

India: Article Views Country's Ties With ASEAN

BK1508003496 Madras THE HINDU in English 10 Aug 96 p 10

[Article by Inder K. Gujral: "Lands of the Asian Miracle"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The G-15, which arose out of the felt need for a compact economic forum of the South, held its first meeting in 1990 at Kuala Lumpur, capital of Malaysia. I had the privilege of representing India at the meeting as member of a delegation led by the then Prime Minister. Mr. Vishwanath Pratap Singh. The world was in an uneasy, uncertain transition from the Cold War to an unknown, uncertain dispensation. The Asian miracle was clearly on the horizon. But the pat ions of the Pacific rim that were carpenting the miracle did not have an idea of what it would exactly turn out to be. The G-15 met, deliberated and dispersed without leaving its visible footprints on the history of the early 1990s.

In July 1996, just a short six years later, I was in Jakarta to represent India at the ASEAN post-ministerial conference as the organisation's full Dialogue Partner. I had also the privilege of representing India at the ASEAN Regional Forum, the security arm of the ASEAN's regional and global engagements. I was overwhelmed at the sea change that had visited our South East Asian neighbours since the end of the Cold War. Not only were they dragons and tigers of the Asian miracle, they were armed with visions of Asia that were truly uplifting. In four days of intense multilayered interaction with India's newest Dialogue Partners, I felt the future pulsebeat of Asia. An Asia that was just not reaching the shores of affluence, but was also spearheading a grand turnaround in history. I marvelled to see the first dawn of the Asia-Pacific Century.

Much has been written about the success story called ASEAN. Still I wonder if many in India have fully appreciated what has happened and continues to happen in South East Asia. The first seminal point about the ASEAN is that it joins the Pacific Ocean to the Indian Ocean; it brings the Pacific rim close to the shores of India and South Asia. As the ASEAN's full Dialogue Partner, India can play a major role in the coming years by building a live, wide bridge of multiple collaboration between the Pacific rim and South Asia.

The ASEAN miracle is to be seen not merely in 20 years of cooperation among its six member States — Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei and the Philippines — but also in the extension of the region's frontiers to cover the entire mainland South East Asia, Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea, three socialist countries that till recently were regarded as hostile to the ASEAN, are or will soon be its full members, while Myanmar (or Burma) will join the group a little later. Thus 10 nations spanning the entire South East Qank of the Asian continent will be woven into a regional entity bound by numerous silken ties of economic, technological, political and strategic cooperation. This entity will be a common market, step by step beginning in the year 2000, when markets of the core six will be to a large extent integrated.

When this happens, it will be an accomplishment deserving greater compliments than the European Union. The idea of One Europe is as old as the French Revolution. The idea gathered strength from Victor Hugo, Goethe, Rousseau, to Romain Rolland, Andre Gide and Leon Blum. Until 1992, the architecture of the European Union was erected by 12 countries of Western Europe which realised that in the world of globalisation of technologies only united and integrated could they stand in competition to the United States, Japan and China.

The ASEAN was born of simpler, more mundane needs; no one bestowed on it the kiss of dreams and crimson fantasies. It grew out of an inner strength which the six found only with the passage of years. A long period of peace among the six, a determination not to permit disputes to debauch into conflicts and confrontations, gradually expanding trade and economic linkages and a gradual realisation of common security laid the foundations of the ASEAN as Asia's first successful experiment in regional cooperation.

The six have social and political systems peculiar to the political dynamics of each one of them. Whatever the political system, the State has acted as an interventionist institution in the economy of each of the countries. Singapore, for instance, can be called a "social-capitalist" society much in the way the Chinese communists call China a "social market economy." Each of the six countries absorbed massive Japanese and U.S. investments, and transformed mercantile or extractive economies into industrially productive ones. Now, in the 1990s, they, together with Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong, are the dragons and tigers of the Pacific rim and, together with Japan and China. may initiate a historic power shift from Euro-America to the Asia-Pacific.

Not that poverty does not exist in the largely populated countries of Indonesia and the Philippines. But it is more than offset by the affluence of the region as a whole. Capital surplus countries like Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei and Thailand now draw the attention of the whole world. Fast-track economic growth over a fairly long period has created wealth even in Indonesia and the Philippines that reaches down to the poor who live at the bottom of these societies. With increasing regional cooperation as the sound byte of the ASEAN, the affluent countries help the less amuent overcome their social problems. The engine of growth will now jog along to the mainland region of Indochina, Vietnam likely emerging as a dragon before very long. It is most remarkable that all of the nine countries of South East Asia, the mainland and the island ones, have developed a common policy to handle the disputes with China over ownership of the Spratlys and other islands in the South China Sea. This has extracted for South East Asia, the respect of the Chinese as well as the other major powers of the world.

I was impressed to learn that the currency of conversations at the ARF [ASEAN Regional Forum] was not threat perception or conflict. It was cooperation for the common security of the region. The ASEAN six have differences, even disputes, between and among themselves. They are not daunted by differences as they have set their minds on containing and then resolving them. External powers cannot exploit intra ASEAN differences nor exploit them to their advantage. Its peoples and their leaders do not need external help to protect the integrity and unity of their countries and their region, which they have built with their own strength over a period of 20 years.

It is this strength and self-confidence of the ASEAN that made Jakarta, for four sun splashed days of July, the hub of the on coming 21st century. To the ASEAN dialogues came the Foreign Ministers of China, Japan, the United States and Russia, not merely to talk to the ASEAN leader but also to talk bilaterally with one another. As India's Foreign Minister, I was able to meet my counterparts from 22 countries. The burden of all the 22 bilateral conversations was opportunities and promises of expanding cooperation between each of these countries and India. These meetings helped me to realise a tremendous reality which still seems not to have captured the imagination of many in India. It is the importance that India has already earned for itself by throwing its doors and windows open to the world, of course in its own way and in its own style. These Foreign Ministers did not forget India's problems of mass poverty. But their minds were riveted on the 250-300 million-strong Indian consumers, its attainment of seven per cent growth in 1996-97, and its potential to emerge as a lion in the second or third decade of the coming century. It is now generally believed all over the world that by 2020 India will be counted among the few major world powers.

It struck me in those busy and educative days in Jakarta that perhaps the time has come for another Asian meeting on the lines of the Asian Relations Conference convened by India in 1947 even before it had attained its independence. Inaugurating that conference, Jawaharlal Nehru had invoked the coming era of Asian resurgence. "A change is coming over the scene and now Asia is again finding itself," he proclaimed. "We live in a tremendous age of transition and already the next stage takes shape when Asia takes its rightful place with other continents."

Nearly 50 years from then, Asia is once again in transition to a far more tremendous age of change, the full implication of which is clear neither to Asians nor to the peoples and their leaders of other continents.

Yet everyone with a sense of history is struck by the first footsteps of that tremendous age of change. India's geographical and historic role has been and continues to be to link the great civilisations, cultures and nations of Asia's east, centre and west. Is India destined to bring together the Pacific East, the Indian Ocean Middle and the Islamic West of the continent to build, together with all the nations of this mother of continents, a huge space for a better life and higher civilisation for one-half of the entire humanity?

India: Influx of Tamil Refugees From Sri Lanka Continues

BK1508163196 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 15 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The influx of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees into Tamil Nadu following the ethnic war in the island nation continues. A UNI report says a fresh batch of 149 Tamils arrived in Rameswaram today. The refugees were interrogated by the police and sent to the refugee camp at Mandapam.

India: Directive To Ensure Impartial Conduct of Polls in Kashmir

BK1608095096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 16 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Election Commission will take a decision on the dates for the Uttar Pradesh and Punjab assembly elections at a meeting in New Delhi on Monday [19 August]. Talking to newsmen at Kochi in Kerala today, the chief election commissioner, Mr. T.N. Seshan, said the whole election process in Uttar Pradesh will be completed by the middle of October. He said by-elections to 60 assembly and three Lok Sabha constituencies may be held before November this year. About Punjab, Mr. Seshan said the commission has ordered an intensive revision of electoral rolls before the assembly elections.

He said in view of the special situation in Jammu and Kashmir, the security arrangements are being beefed up for the smooth conduct of the election. He said all political parties have been asked to conduct internal elections to the party bodies before the end of this year. Meanwhile, the commission has directed the poll observers to ensure impartial conduct of polls in Jammu and Kashmir. The commission briefed the general and expenditure observers today about their role in the forthcoming assembly polls in the state. The commission said the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir will be more crucial as the observers have been empowered with legal status by the latest electoral reforms. They can now stop polling and counting if any irregularities or electoral malpractices are found. About 60 observers attended the briefing in New Delhi today. The first batch of observers for 26 constituencies going to the polls on the seventh of next month in the first phase is likely to go to the state immediately. They will oversee the election process and check election-related expenditure and malpractices.

India: Army Foils Plot To Disrupt Election Process in Kashmir

BK1308164496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 13 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The process of assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir begins tomorrow when the state governor, General K.V. Krishna Rao, will issue the notification for the first phase of polling on the seventh of next month. Twenty-six constituencies of Baramula, Kargil, Kupwara, Leh, Punch, and Rajaori will go to the polls in the first phase. Polling in the remaining constituencies will be held in three more phases on the 16th, 21st, and 30th of next month. The last date for filing nominations for the first phase of polling will be on the 21st of this month. Scrutiny will take place on the 24th.

The minister of state for home, Mr. Mohammad Maqbul Dar, has said the government is keen to ensure the participation of all political parties, including the Hurriyyat Conference, in the coming assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir. Talking to our correspondent in Srinagar today, Mr. Dar said this is necessary in the interest of the people of Kashmir and the country. He said every step will be taken to ensure free and fair polls.

Meanwhile, a team of Janata Dal leaders arrived in Srinagar today to hold discussions with local leaders. The team will submit its report to the Political Affairs Committee of the party. The team includes Mr. Sharad Yadav, Mr. Ram Vilas Paswan, and Mr. Wasim Ahmad.

The union home secretary has said in New Delhi that security has been beefed up in the state for peaceful conduct of polls and to create a sense of confidence among the people. Mr. K. Padmanabaiah said that all logistical arrangements have been completed for transportation of central security forces, polling personnel, and election material.

The governor of Jammu and Kashmir, General K.V. Krishna Rao, has urged the security forces to maintain utmost vigil to foil the Pakistani designs to thwart the election. He was addressing the Border Security Force jawans [soldiers] in Srinagar today.

Meanwhile, the Army has foiled a major plot hatched by militants to disrupt the election process in the state. An Army spokesman said today that a militant group leader has been killed in an encounter with the Army near Bhadarwah in Doda District. Three members of the group have been arrested. The arrested militants disclosed that the Inter Service Intelligence of Pakistan has sent them to carry out the task.

India: Pakistan-Trained Militants Surrender in Kashmir

BK1608094596 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 16 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Kashmir, seven Pakistani-trained militants have surrendered to the security forces along with arms and ammunition near the Line of Control in Machail forest area. The inspector general of BSF [Border Security Force], Kashmir, Mr. Appa Saheb Alur, told newsmen in Srinagar today that the surrender came after the security forces cordoned off the two villages where the militants were hiding for the last three days. He said another five militants of the group hiding in the area are expected to surrender today. He said infiltration from across the Line of Control has been on the increase in view of the ensuing assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir. He said additional security forces are being deployed to meet the situation.

India: Article Notes Efforts To Rejuvenate Congress in Karnataka

BK1408144896 Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English 13 Aug 96

[Article by N. C. Gundu Rao: "Time for Rejuvenating Congress in Karnataka" — received via internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The you-are-my-enemy-here-but-friend-there attitude that characterises the relations between the Congress and the Janata Dal in Karnataka is undoubtedly contradictory to the core. Yet, this is the absurd picture presented by the relations of these two political entities in the country, taken as a whole. No doubt, what appears to be an inherent contradiction, has become a historic necessity for these two politically hostile parties to co-exist at the Centre, at least in the light of the fractured verdict delivered by the electorate in the recent Lok Sabha elections. In other words, the mandate of the 11th Lok Sabha poll has sought to assign a new task to the secular sections of the polity, in general, and the non-Congress components, in particular, since the electoral verdict compelled the latter to alter their attitude of blind anti-Congressism to meet a lethal and potential communal challenge to the very liberal democratic fabric of the nation.

Even then, if the political fallout in Karnataka, because of the Congress' decision to extend support from outside, to the United Front [UF] Ministry at the Centre is too palpable to be ignored, there is more than one valid reason for it. This is so because the political and electoral equations between the Congress and the Janata Dal, even in the latter's various incarnations, had all along been that of two potential rivals in the electoral battlefield and that combative spirit has not been allowed to mellow, notwithstanding some aberrations in the personal equations of certain leaders in the two parties.

But what has really lent a sharp edge to the political fallout of the UF-Congress pact and is causing understandable discomfiture and worry among Congressmen having party interests at heart is the emergence of Janata Dal strongman H D Deve Gowda as the Prime Minister of the country since the mantle of leadership of the United Front Ministry, cobbled up by 13 assorted parties, ultimately fell on his shoulders.

This, therefore, is the context in which one has to view the initial reservations reportedly expressed by some State Congress leaders on their High Command persuading itself to prop up from outside the UF Ministry headed by a Karnataka politician, who had all along been the political adversary of the Congress in the State. Similarly, the apprehensions now being voiced by Congress leaders like former Railway Minister C K Jaffer Sharif that Mr Deve Gowda's success in his exalted office might sound the virtual death-knell of the Congress in Karnataka, cannot be treated lightly.

Although the present political compulsions at the national level might have made it inevitable for the secular democratic forces to consider the threat from the communal forces to the polity to be more dangerous than that from the Congress, it can in no way minimise the importance of ensuring that the voter has two sets of secular alternatives at the time of elections. As far as the Karnataka voter, in general, is concerned, he has given little room for any doubt about his general inclination to confine his politico- electoral preferences to the secular strands of the polity. This has been reflected clearly in the voting pattern in election after election and the outcome of the latest parliamentary election was no exception.

Nothing illustrates this preference of the average voter more tellingly and clearly than the percentage of votes shared by different parties in the 1996 Lok Sabha elections. A critical and comparative analysis of the percentage of votes secured by the political parties makes it clear as daylight that it was the Congress, which received 30.29 per cent of votes, that has emerged as the second largest party next to the Janata Dal, which polled 34.91 per cent of the votes.

This not only means that the Congress has improved its voting percentage by nearly 6 per cent compared with the 1994 State Assembly elections but demolishes the myth that the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] has emerged as the main rival to the ruling Janata Dal in the State.

Moreover, the fact that the percentage of votes polled by the Congress in the parliamentary elections was higher than that of the BJP may also demonstrate that the electoral clout of the Congress is much superior to that of the BJP, especially at the grassroots level.

It is actually this wider and relatively stronger vote base of the Congress, as clearly reflected in the percentage of votes secured by it, that lends special relevance to the idea of reinvogorating the organisation, as suggested by various leaders, ranging from Mr Jaffer Sharif, elder statesman S Nijalingappa, former chief minister Veerendra Patil to KPCC(I) [Karnataka Pradesh, State, Congress Committee-I] Vice-President A K Anantha Krishna. That the same idea has been articulated in different forms by these leaders is beside the point. Anyway, it must be said to the credit of the State Congress that its legislature wing has thus far functioned as a serious Opposition in an earnest way and kept a healthy distance from the ruling Janata Dal, notwithstanding the enforced political proximity between the Congress and the Dal at the Centre and this should serve as another plus point in the process of revitalisation.

Yet, it might be utopian to hope for the rejuvenation process to be free of hiccups since it hinges on the many ifs and buts that beset the affairs of the Congress Party both at the Central and State levels. The biggest 'if' is whether the Congressmen will be able to rise above groupism and accept the historic role of providing a secular alternative that the average voter is looking for.

India: FIPC Seeks To Accelerate, Increase, Direct, FDI Flow

BK1308153596 Madras THE HINDU in English 13 Aug 96 p 11

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Foreign direct investment [FDI] flows are expected to accelerate through the efforts of the newly constituted Foreign Investment Promotion Council (FIPC). According to the Industry Minister, Mr. Murasoli Maran, the Council will aim at identifying specific sectors where such FDI flows can be enhanced instead of taking a broad approach to investment promotion schemes. For instance, the needs of the infrastructure sector have to be examined carefully to identify the areas where FDI flows needs to be enhanced.

The FIPC will conduct studies for this purpose. The chairman of the Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India (ICICI), Mr. N. Vaghul, who is to head the Council, is expected to utilise his expertise in evaluating investment schemes to ensure the success of the target-oriented approach.

Apart from Mr. Vaghul, the Council will include Mr. Ashok Ganguly, Mr. Gurcharan Das and the presidents of the three apex business associations, such as Assocham, CII and FICCI. Mr. Pushpendra Rai of the Industry Ministry will be the Member Secretary.

The activities of the Council will include events on the lines of the foreign investment promotion conference known as Destination India. Though this conference had been planned earlier and is being organised by the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB), all such future events will be handled by the FIPC.

The FIPC has been specifically directed to undertake investment promotional activity which entails making extensive contact with potential investors, lobbying and interacting with individual companies. The Council will capitalise, manage and coordinate investment promotion and marketing efforts.

The Industry Minister feels promotional efforts have been mostly focussed on addressing general investment promotion seminars and conferences. Besides that, a more target-oriented approach is now required, both to identify the sectors and projects within the country needing foreign direct investment and also targeting the specific regions and countries from which FDI can be attracted through special efforts.

Mr. Maran is of the view that the needs of various sectors and industries in this country need to be analysed in terms of modernisation, technology upgradation and capital requirement. Sectoral profiles and project proposals for these industries will need to be prepared for presentation to the selected international companies and foreign investors. It will also be necessary to undertake a one-to-one dialogue with individual foreign investors at the boardroom level in order to motivate them to invest in the specified industries and sectors.

It is felt the government has to identify specific regions and countries where surplus capital is available for overseas investment. Target-oriented efforts will be necessary to contact individual companies in those countries for persuading them to invest in India.

The setting up of the Council follows the government's decision to strengthen the institutional mechanism relating to the consideration and approvals of the FDI proposals. The Common Minimum Programme of the United Front states that the nation needs and has the capacity to absorb at least ten billion dollars a year as FDI. This will need considerable promotional efforts apart from facilitating foreign investment approvals.

The strategy being adopted is a two-pronged one with one relating to the approvals and clearances required as per the transparent guidelines and the other relating to full-time Investment promotion and marketing. Accordingly a revamped FIPB has been put under the direct control of the Industry Minister thereby reducing one level in decision making. As a secondary and supporting measure the FIPC was considered necessary.

India: Import Duty on Small Power Plant Equipment Reduced

BK1408143896 Delhi THE ECONOMIC TIMES in English 13 Aug 96

[Report by Pragati Kapoor—received via internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In a major tax concession to boost the infrastructure sector, specifically power generation and transmission, the import duty on captive power plant equipment has been cut from 50 per cent to 20 per cent.

While this is not immediately evident from the budget papers, a scrutiny of the fine print shows that the benefit of 20 per cent duty has been extended to captive power plants of 5 MW and above and also to power transmission projects of 66 KW and above. The basic duty on power transmission equipment was 80 per cent earlier.

This implies a very large reduction in import duty on captive power generation equiment and is likely to lead to import of these on a large-scale because of the power paucity in the country.

It is learnt that the power ministry had been requesting the finance ministry for such an incentive for several years as domestic supply of such equipment is limited.

Welcoming the concession, the power ministry stated that this concession would boost independent power generation tremendously in a short span and thereby reduce the load on the grid.

It will be a boost to all power-intensive industries as well as they can now install a captive power plant at a much lower cost and ensure uninterrupted supply.

Captive power plants normally range between 5-100 megawatt.

These plants can be set up quickly, have a short gestation period, as compared to waiting to buy power from the commercial private sector power producers, most of whom are yet to start building their plants.

Earlier, captive power plant equipment did not get the concessional project duty even if the unit was being set up along with some manufacturing unit which got the benefit of concession.

Apart from the 20 per cent concessional project import duty for project imports for the power sector, an additional duty— countervailing excise duty — of 10 per cent is also levied.

However, this 10 per cent was levied over the basic import duty of 50 per cent and 80 per cent on captive power plant equipment and power transmission equipment earlier too.

While power transmission is not open to the private sector as yet, this customs duty concession will greatly benefit state electricity boards [SEB's] Orissa, Rajasthan and Haryana.

These SEBs plan to revamp and split their generating and transmission operations into separate companies.

These subsidiary transmission companies are likely to purchase a lot of equipment in order to modernise.

Iran

Iran: Reaction To Bob Dole's Republican Nomination

LD1608141996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 16 Aug 96

[Unattributed commentary: "Bob Dole's Statements About Iran"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Republican candidate of the U.S. presidential elections, Bob Dole, in his election speech, which is ironically called the Coronation [as heard], formally announced his nomination as Bill Clinton's rival in the next November presidential elections. In his speech, Mr. Dole described his future policies for the American people and claimed to expand U.S. struggle against countries which support terrorism. He further reiterated the policies of the Republicans in the implementation of military force in the world.

Bob Dole cunningly tried to ignore the Republican Party's attempts in establishing relations with Iran in the McFarlane case and, by claiming that United States had shown a green-light to Iran in dispatching weapons to Bosnia, placed his Democrat rival, Bill Clinton, in a passive position. It seems that Mr. Bob Dole prefers to ignore that fact that at that time the Republicans insisted on cancelling the arms sanctions against Bosnia — in opposition to Clinton — to earn prestige among the American people. Bob Dole called Iran a terrorist state and said he is against showing a green-light to the countries like Iran which support terrorism.

Bob Dole has been nominated as candidate for presidential elections twice but each time has been defeated in the inner party elections. This time he is trying to gain popularity by claiming to confront Iran as a terrorist state and deceive the American people since he is aware that the United States internal propaganda is intensely guided against Iran. But the fact is that the era of global militarism has ended and the world has entered a new phase which Mr. Dole, a representative of the old generation, is unable to perceive its dimensions. Concerning Bob Dole's propaganda slogans against the United Nations and its General-Secretary and his unwise and hasty statements about terrorism, it can be predicted that in the next November presidential elections the Republican candidate will face defeat.

Iran: Majles Speaker Says Negotiations With U.S. Will 'Solve Nothing'

LD1408211196 Tehran IRNA in English 1112 GMT 14 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Aug 14, IRNA — Majles Speaker Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri said here Wednesday [14 August] that rejecting economic, political and cultural domination was atop the principles of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Nateq-Nuri, speaking to home-coming Iranian ambassadors and head of the diplomatic missions abroad, said that all the problems created for and pressures exerted on Islamic Iran today was due to the fact that Iranian officials were not willing to be dominated by foreigners, led by the U.S.

The speaker said that if the U.S. intended to dominate Muslim countries, Iran would condemn it and take stance against it.

He called those people favoring or believing in negotiations with the U.S. as "naive", and pointed out that negotiations with the U.S. would solve nothing. Iranian officials will never back down from their stands, he added.

The U.S. is aggressive by nature and is trying to harm the prestige of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the speaker said.

Nateq-Nuri said that the dignity or prestige of countries by no means depended on such parameters as the gross domestic product, per capita income or power, but rather on the degree of the influence they wield in the world.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the speaker said that Iran's revolution has revived the Islamic thought and left its impacts globally, especially on the world oppressed. For this reason, he added, the world should differentiate between this matter and other issues.

He said that establishment of an economic balance between the developed and developing states, emphasis on the human rights and opposition to terrorism were among Iran's foreign policies.

He added that Iranian officials believed that regional security should be preserved by regional states themselves, stressing the unity among Muslims, expansion of ties with Muslim countries and giving priority to ties with them.

Nateq-Nuri said that oil was an undurable [as received] commodity which belonged to future generations.

Iran: Foreign Ministry Spokesman Interviewed on U.S. Aims

NC1508131396 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 11 Aug 96 pp 1, 14

[TEHRAN TIMES Service report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran—Through tightening its sanctions against Iran, Washington intends to put its influence over other countries to the test to see to what extent the world toes the line and submits to its political hegemony in the aftermath of the cold war, Foreign Ministry's Spokesman, Mahmud Mohammadi, told the TEHRAN TIMES.

To make other countries bow down to its domination in the long run, Washington is making every effort to take the world's strategic energy resources under control and use them as economic leverage against its rivals the European Union and Japan, in the emerging world order, Mohammadi added.

He went on by saying that the American politicians have overlooked the fact that, under the present international system, no independent country is willing to jeopardize its national interests for the sake of other countries, let alone the European Union, which has emerged as a major multinational economic power.

"The U.S. President Bill Clinton is seeking in vain to universalize his country's domestic rules and make the world obey them," Mohammadi stressed, adding that "The U.S. president must realize that the internationally accepted laws related to the World Trade Organization will not be influenced by his country's domestic rules and regulations."

Furthermore, the Foreign Ministry's spokesman noted, he should bear in mind that charging a country that itself has been a victim of terrorist acts with fostering terrorism, in the absence of any solid evidence and definite proof, will not help the U.S. administration to solve its domestic problems.

"What the world today needs is logical arguments and not bullying by a country which is bent on taking the lead in the international arena," he stressed, adding that the U.S. is well aware that its accusations against Iran are unfounded and also that the sanctions will not decrease Iran's revenue from oil.

He further said that the prevalent situation in the U.S., which is on the verge of the next presidential elections, suggests that the sanctions have proved a banana skin for the Clinton administration. "In other words, the Republicans helped to create the situation so as to take the lead in the next presidential elections," he added.

It is a vain expectation that other countries forgo their own national interests and independence for the internal rivalries in the U.S. and the insatiable demands of that country. he said.

Iran: IRGC Commander Comments on Readiness To Counter U.S. Attack

NC1508142996 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 11 Aug 96 p 15

[TEHRAN TIMES Service commentary: "Iran Ready To Defend Every Inch of Its Territory"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran—The Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) at a seminar of top brass officers held here Thursday [8 August], stressed: Iran is neither championing nor pioneering the policy of defense, but if the United States commit such a blunder in the Persian Gulf, their forces would end up being besieged..

The statement was made after a high-ranking Iranian military official announced that U.S. warplanes violated Iran's airspace over the southern city of Bushehr and the island of Abu Musa in August 3.

At a time, when the U.S. has realized that its economic sanctions against Iran have practically failed, Washington ceaselessly tries to cover up its failure through mischievous provocations.

The idea of military aggression on Iran has been advocated by the Zionist. The advocates of the attack have probably forgotten that Iranian soldiers and Basijis did not allowed Saddam Husayn—backed by almost all powerful countries of the world—to annex even a single inch of Iran's sacred territory.

The DAILY TELEGRAPH a couple of days ago called for U.S. missile attack on the Iran.

In addition, the Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu asked Bill Clinton to attack four key targets in the Iranian soil, and finally both U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry and Speaker of the House of Representatives Newt Gingrich urged the U.S. administration to take a military action against Iran.

The reality is that the United States tries to cover up its failures through leveling baseless charges of sponsoring terrorism to other countries.

The United States has never been successful in proving its baseless allegations against Iran. The U.S. should realize that such hostile plots cause more disgrace to Washington.

Now, amid the U.S. presidential election campaign, Clinton tries to gain the financial support of the Jews through playing into the tune of the Zionist regime.

The U.S. military threats are nothing but vain brawling. The United States has been resorting to this nasty practice since the victory of the Islamic Revolution but of no avail.

This is clear that the U.S. is the main source of instability in the Persian Gulf.

Undoubtedly, the Iranian Armed Forces as well as the Basiji forces will never give in to U.S. threats and will defend every inch of Iranian territory. They are also capable of protecting Iran's interests in the Persian Gulf.

Iran: Washington's 'Inimical Propaganda' on Iran Decried

NC1508144996 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 6 Aug 96 pp 1, 16

[Editorial: "The United States Always Lies"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful.

Following the Washington hierarchy's intensification of its hostile attacks against the Islamic Republic of Iran, Foreign Minister Dr. Velayati sent a letter to the UN secretary general asking the United Nations to take the necessary steps to prevent the dangerous consequences of such irresponsible behavior by the Washington officials. He stressed that the accusations leveled by the U.S. officials were an insult to Iran's national sovereignty.

In the letter, the foreign minister deemed the United States responsible for the consequences of the above and elaborated that the Washington hierarchy, including the defense secretary and the speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, are disseminating incorrect information and hostile propaganda about the Islamic Republic of Iran. At the same time, they put forward reckless proposals for military action against the Islamic Republic of Iran in an effort to play on the wounded sentiments of world opinion.

Almost simultaneously, U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry—in a defensive gesture—retracted his earlier statement on the Islamic Republic of Iran's involvement in the Dharan explosion and added that Iran was not named the culprit, denying any statement to that effect.

This is not the first time that out of sheer habit, the Washington officials have pointed their accusatory fingers at the Islamic Republic of Iran as soon as any incident takes place and even before there is a chance for any preliminary investigation. Then they revoke their earlier allegations. However, the issue is that world public opinion has realized that this is the usual ploy by the Washington officials and they no longer believe in it.

No one has forgotten the massive explosion at the U.S. Government building in Oklahoma when the United States immediately accused Iran and then pointed its finger at the Muslims in the United States. However, it later transpired that it was a non-Muslim American who was responsible for the explosion and who had personal reasons for taking revenge.

The Washington administration should keep in mind that with their foolish behavior they have created quite a few enemies for themselves and at the same time they are hopeful that they will be able to continue their seditious and misanthropic policies under such circumstances. Experience has shown that presenting Islamic Iran as the cause of such incidents is not only of no assistance to the United States, but the continuation of such a trend of hostile propaganda is even detrimental to Washington for the following reasons:

1. The actual agents of these terrorist actions feel confident that there is hardly a likelihood of being identified or pursued and seek opportunities for dealing more horrible blows to the United States. An important point is that some suspect parties, including the Zionists, enter the fray in order to fan the propaganda so that they can downplay their role in such incidents.

2. The repetition of the baseless claims and the dissemination of false information—which they rebut after a while—has resulted in eroding the prestige of the Washington officials among its remaining allies and on the international level. It is due to the persistence of such a discordant state of affairs that today the European governments and media do not have the slightest trust in the unfounded and unresearched allegations of the Washington hierarchy and are now certain that the Washington officials always lie.

3. The continuing inimical propaganda by Washington, which is made in such an inefficient manner, is an attempt to mask the weakness of its security forces and to project the impression that it is monitoring everything, even though it has been unable to provide any kind of reliable or trustworthy information about such incidents to the world so far, except for a handful of repetitive falsehoods.

4. Of course, it is possible that Clinton and his Zionist associates may consider such an ongoing situation to their benefit and wish to keep feeding lies to the world. However, the question is, why has the international community become indifferent in the face of such

inhuman behavior and why do even Washington's allies object to its fabrications? They have informed Washington's officials in no uncertain terms that this is not an appropriate way to resolve the U.S.' proliferating problems and disputes and any measures for transferring the center of the crisis from the United States to the Persian Gulf or any other venue cannot unravel the knot of its mounting and complex problems.

Iran: Commentary Says U.S. Using Afghan Crisis To Increase Presence

LD1508145296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 15 Aug 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The head of the American Senate's Foreign Affairs Committee, Hank Brown, ended his visit to Afghanistan on Wednesday 14 August. He recalled his negotiations with the Afghan leaders, especially Borhanoddin Rabbani and Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, as fruitful.

Meanwhile, the experts interpret the outcome of the American official's third visit this year to Afghanistan differently. Brown left Afghanistan while the Afghan prime minister, Golboddin Hekmatyar, refused to meet with him. Hekmatyar recalled the reason for not meeting the American official as the unfriendly stance of Washington toward Afghanistan and the interfering policies of America in the domestic affairs of other countries such as the implementation of the D'Amato law. According to the experts, although other Afghan Government officials met with the American official, however, they did not recall it as positive.

A glance at the determining factors in American policies and the political circumstances in the Indian peninsula and Central Asia shows clearly Washington's diplomatic movements' motivations in Afghanistan. Factors like America's demand for influencing the Indian, Pakistani, Chinese, Iranian and Central Asian governments has led to intense efforts of Washington to influence the region. But the fact is that considering the political stances of its parties, the United States evaluates reaching its goals as very difficult.

This is why that it seems one of the ways that U.S. has considered to reach its goals is taking advantage of the political crises. Specifically, the Afghan crisis has been considered by Washington as a pretext for the presence of the American military forces in the region. Especially, the American bill to boycott the armament and to disarm Afghan factions, after four years of indifference to Afghanistan's civil war, has no aim but a pretext for stationing American troops in this country.

But what seems to be more important in the current circumstances is the suspicious trend used by the American diplomats to create discord among the Afghan factions, especially in the government, and to intensify Afghanistan's crisis.

A glance at the political crises in the recent years throughout the world shows that although the intensification of the crises has been a burden on people's shoulder, it has been the most suitable opportunity for the U.S.. Under such conditions, the American government, utilizing the mass media, provides the international ground for its presence in the region. Therefore, obviously the concern of Afghans regarding the American moves spawns from the American policy, causing the intensification of crisis before solving it.

Iran: RESALAT Warns U.S. 'Limited Blow' May Bring 'Unlimited Blows'

NC1508152696 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 8 Aug 96 pp 1, 16

[Editorial by Mohammad Kazem Anbarlu'i: "Military Knavery"]

[FBIS Translated Text] America's body today is like that of a person with thick, muscled arms and a thick neck but a very small head. The meaning of this picture is that America's foreign diplomacy has never been based on prudence and reasoning, but has always been one of flexing muscles—a policy that has not proven effective anywhere or at any time.

For some time now, murmurs about an American military attack against Iran have been published in the Zionist-influenced press and mass media. And America is acting like a foolish man who is committing a gross and harmful act for the sake of petty allurements.

The DAILY TELEGRAPH, which is owned by a Canadian Jew, calls for an American missile attack on the Information Ministry and the National Security Council of Iran . Also, it is said that the head of the Zionist regime has called on Clinton to bomb four areas on Iranian territory.

The pretexts used by the Americans for this kind of military knavery are the explosion of the TWA jet over New York, the explosion at the Americans' headquarters in Dhahran, and the explosions that sometimes occur in America or in countries under Washington's influence; America wants to call these pretexts the fight against terrorism.

But world opinion has some major questions to ask the Americans about their behavior:

1. What documents and proof do you have to accuse Islamic Iran of terrorism?
2. Why do you resort to terrorism to fight terrorism?!
3. Why do you violate the principle of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of countries in your so-called policy of confrontation with terrorism and why do you sit down in the U.S. Congress or in the White House and make decisions for the entire world?

The Americans' answer to the first question is: Our source is the Iranians who are living in European and American capitals. In other words, these are the same terrorists who were forced to leave their own country for having perpetrated tragic terrorist acts!

In answer to the second question, the Americans only point at the thickness of their muscles!

And in answer to the third question they say that the world should accept that it has only one owner!

But how can the Americans' behavior be assessed?

One assessment is that when the American officials were adopting their idiotic stances, they were definitely not in a normal state of mind. But a decision cannot be undone. Another assessment is that after the disintegration of the Eastern Bloc, the Americans went out of business and a bunch of idle people in the Pentagon, the CIA, and the State Department sat down and asked each other: What should we do with all these weapons of mass destruction sitting in our arsenals? What should we do with all the spies, and at whom should we bare our claws and teeth in our foreign diplomacy?

American foreign diplomacy and the extensive U.S. Government machinery are looking for something serious to do in order to solve all their domestic and foreign problems. They attribute terrorist behavior, which can only be the outcome of the sick minds of those who are sitting in the White House and seeking to make mischief, to Iran while they know that Iran itself is the largest victim of terrorism—both the domestic and the foreign kind!

Last Saturday [3 August] 20 American F-14's and F-15's were spotted at 2330 [1900 GMT] 50 km south of Bushehr. What this means in military language is nothing but a military brawl.

The heroic Iranian nation should strongly crush the mouth of America to prevent the repetition of such brawls.

The Armed Forces and the devoted forces should never be in doubt about pointing the barrels of their guns at any American military movement in the region which threatens Islam and the Islamic Republic.

America should know that if it is after a "limited blow" to punish Iran, it should expect unlimited blows in the future.

Iran: Daily Says Sanctions To Secure Zionist Votes for Clinton

LD1608130896 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English
12 Aug 96 p 2

[Unatributed report: "Sanctions To Secure Zionist Votes for Clinton"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tehran — Ghayasuddin Siddiqi, Britain's Muslim Parliament head, accused President Bill Clinton of signing the anti-Iran sanctions to secure more Zionist votes.

He said, in an interview with the Persian daily IRAN printed yesterday, that such schemes against Islamic countries, including Iran, were masterminded and implemented according to the Zionists' will.

Siddiqi, also the editor-in-chief of the Canada-based CRESCENT INTERNATIONAL, called on world Muslims to confront the U.S. anti-Iran plan. He said Islamic countries should condemn such interventionist schemes.

Britain's Muslim Parliament [as published] stated that the American people should realize the implementation of such plans only favored Zionist interests and not the U.S. national interests.

He said that such a significant phenomenon encouraged Islam's followers, especially those in Europe, to be proud of being Muslims, he said, pointing to the Islamic revolution's triumph over blasphemy.

The U.S. needed to create a hypothetical enemy in order to perpetuate its hegemony over global energy resources, following the collapse of the world's bipolar system.

He noted that the U.S. is also forging rivalries in order to sell its armaments and to find clients for its military products.

Siddiqi added that, therefore, the U.S. has been trying to misrepresent independent Islamic countries as the West's enemies and attempts to attribute terrorist act to Muslims.

However, he stressed that while the United States accuses Islamic countries of supporting terrorism, the fact is that Muslims themselves are the main victims of terrorist moves, IRNA reported.

Iran: Tehran To Respect Final Nuclear Test Ban Document

LD1508204696 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1930 GMT 15 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Passage omitted] At a news conference in Geneva on 14 July, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif stressed that Iran respected and was determined to implement the final document of the nuclear test ban treaty. He said the United States wanted to force the signing of a treaty only because it intended to exploit the document for domestic purposes.

He added: From an Iranian viewpoint, there are only a few unresolved issues in the nuclear test ban treaty and they are not being resolved only because governments are not showing enough will and determination.

Iran: Envoy Says U.S. Plays 'Rogue Midwife' Role at Geneva Talks

LD1508200796 Tehran IRIB Television Third Program Network in English 1830 GMT 15 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Days of talks in Geneva on the nuclear test ban treaty have ended inconclusively. Iran's representative at the talks, Sirus Naseri, joined us on the phone right after the talks this afternoon in an interview with our colleague Mahmud Ahmadi.

[Begin recording] [Naseri] We had another rough day yesterday on negotiations to try to arrive at a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Negotiations went beyond midnight. Eventually those who were in favor of rushing a failure decision to the conference on disarmament prevailed. I find that to be preposterous because it is unprecedented that countries would push to have a treaty that is facing so much dissatisfaction by a part of international community that has been calling for and aspiring for the treaty.

[Correspondent] What has been the major cause of the talks' failure and who has been blamed for that?

[Naseri] There is a lot of name-calling here. The nuclear powers, [in] particular the United States, like to put the blame on India and some other countries. But the truth of the matter is that the Americans have tried to play, I can say, the role of a death-wishing rogue midwife trying to deliver a premature baby. Forcep[s] does not apply in these sort of negotiations. They will probably kill the baby and harm the mother both. I think most negotiators realized this. They are willing and are trying to see whether they can still salvage the treaty here so that there will be a solid document supported by all states that will be presented to the United Nations General Assembly later on in September. But for the time being things are rather gloomy here.

Today we laid out our positions on the latest situation at the conference on disarmament. We presented as to how we felt that consensus could be reached as far as we are concerned by making some very small changes in the text, changes that we believe are very much reasonable. Now, we are going to continue to push for this and, of course, we'll eventually make our decisions as to how we will deal with the treaty in accordance to the situation that as it may arise. [as heard]

[Correspondent] Mr. Naseri, thank you very much.

Iran: Envoy Notes Expanding Relations With China

LD1308092196 Tehran IRNA in English 0630 GMT 13 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Aug. 13, IRNA — Since the culmination of the Islamic revolution, relations between Iran and China have taken a favorable turn, noted Iranian Ambassador to Beijing Hoseyn Mir-Fakhr, adding that bilateral trade also exhibited an upward trend.

"The two countries support each other's stance at the international level as they share identical views on most world issues," he told the English-language IRAN NEWS in an interview printed Tuesday [13 August].

China explicitly denounced last week's U.S. legislation against Iran, he said, adding that Chinese media expressed disagreement with Washington's policies to isolate Iran.

Economic relations are also rosy, with Irano-Chinese bilateral trade reaching dlrs. 504 million, reflecting a 12.7 percent increase as compared to the preceding year, the ambassador reported.

Remarking on Iran's success in marketing its goods in China, he disclosed that Iranian exports to that country showed a 24.8 percent hike while imports rose by four percent in 1995.

"Major exports to China include steel, dried fruits and household appliances," Mir-Fakhr said.

To introduce Iranian goods to the Chinese market, Tehran organized two trade fairs in Beijing. Iran and China also have a joint ministerial commission, which has held eight meetings, the last of which was in the Chinese capital.

The ninth meeting of the joint commission is scheduled to be held in Tehran in autumn, the daily reported.

On joint projects undertaken by Tehran and Beijing, the ambassador mentioned the Tehran metro system, as well as cement and glass factories, a thermal power plant in Shahzand, Arak, and several mining projects.

"The exchange of high-level visits between the two countries help in expanding bilateral relations, he underlined, saying that Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen and head of the People's Congress (parliament) Qiao Shi are due to arrive in Iran in autumn.

Iran: Commentary on Hamas Opposition to More Jewish Settlements

LD1608145796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 16 Aug 96

[Unattributed commentary: "Request of Hamas"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] — The Islamic resistance movement of Palestine, Hamas, on Thursday 15 August, in a communique, called on the Palestinians to uprise against the construction of Jewish settlements in the occupied lands. The publishing of this communique is in reality a reaction toward the Zionist regime's expansionist policies. This regime, in order to stabilize its illegitimate presence in the occupied lands, is constructing new Jewish settlements.

The request to the resistance toward such a policy takes place after a recession in the intifada operations. Undoubtedly the only factor which can dissuade Netanyahu's government from continuing the program of expanding the Jewish settlements is the continuation of the Palestinian people's negative resistance. This is while the request of Mr. 'Arafat from Clinton in order to pressure the Zionist regime to stop the construction of settlements will have no results because, first, the Clinton government, on the threshold of the presidential elections, does not want nor is capable of putting pressure on the Tel Aviv regime to stop the construction of settlement and, second, the Zionist regime in the past has demonstrated that it only understands the language of force and does not pay much attention to political pressures concerning its expansionist policies.

Political observers expect that Hamas's request to resist toward the Israeli expansionism will lead to a new movement in the intifada process of Palestine. Although the blows received from the Zionist regime's suppressive operations and the treason of those who reconciled in the Palestinian movement has, up to a point, slowed the movement of the intifada. Despite this, the majority of political analysts describe the situation of the Zionist regime more distorted than before. They believe that the internal conflicts in Israel's sovereignty, especially between Netanyahu and the foreign minister, David Levi, has lead the Zionist regime to have less power for manoeevre toward its opponents. Also the was-seeking stance of the new Tel Aviv Government has made the situation for the Zionists more difficult than before in the international circles.

Now it must be seen what the reaction will be to the response of Hamas's request in the occupied lands.

Iran: Foreign Minister Velayati Says Iran Seeks Good Ties With Arab World

LD1308212196 Tehran IRNA in English 1810 GMT 13 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Athens, Aug 13, IRNA — Iran's Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati in an interview with an Egyptian newspaper today said Tehran wishes to have good relations with the Arab world, and repeated his conviction that the D'Amato bill will have not effect on the Islami republic's economy or investment.

"We in Iran desire very good relations with the Arab world which is an important part of the Islamic world," Velayati told Islamic newspaper AL-SHA'B in a telephone interview. "The Islamic world must stand in one rank to defend its interests and to counter the enemies of Islam. We believe that the interests of the Arab world will be guaranteed within the framework of friendly relations with Iran, and not inimical ties," he said.

"We do not expect from the Arab world to stand against Iran, or repeat what happened in Iraq."

Velayati's interview was published as the main front-page story of the bi-weekly AL-SHA'B Tuesday [13 August]. The foreign minister said Iran will teach an "unforgettable lesson" to any aggressor, and underlined that Tehran has no ambitions outside its borders and has no intention of attacking anybody. Velayati stressed that the U.S. sanctions will have no effect because Iran is in no need of America for development or investments. He dismissed American charges of terrorism against Iran as "lies and fabrications," aimed to distract domestic problems in the U.S. and for political reasons.

Egypt: Tehran Urges Egypt To Distance Itself From Israel

LD1308132496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1000 GMT 13 Aug 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] The increase in the activities of Islamist groups in Egypt is causing concern to that country's officials. The Egyptian police has thus embarked on a new wave of arrests and the Egyptian Interior Ministry announced that it has arrested a large number of opposition Islamist forces in Cairo and in other large cities of that country.

By claiming that those arrested intended to carry out certain actions against the government, Egypt has criticized certain European and neighboring countries — notably Sudan — for giving asylum to the leaders of these groups, and it has called on them to cooperate with the Egyptian Government to detain these individuals.

In the opinion of political analysts, by linking internal unrest and opposition to elements outside the borders of that country, Egypt is trying to play down internal discontent and opposition. The continuation of this opposition, however, and the wave of arrests and trials in Egypt demonstrate that Cairo is under extreme pressure from its domestic critics. These critics, who are recognized as Islamic groups, emphasize Islamic values and principles and call for the implementation of Islamic law in that country.

Since the Egyptians are Muslims, the Islamist groups and supporters of Islamic law in that country enjoy the support of a strong social base. In this respect, the arrest of members of Islamist groups and even the call for their leaders to be returned by European countries, cannot destroy the roots of unrest in that country.

The Egyptian Government will only achieve its aim of reducing opposition in that country by taking steps toward implementation of Islamic law in that country, and by distancing itself from the Zionist regime, which the Egyptian people regard with contempt and anger.

Iran: Official on Setting Up Common Market With Azerbaijan

*LD1308152796 Tehran IRNA in English
1230 GMT 13 Aug 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Astara, Gilan Prov., Aug. 13, IRNA — Governor General of Iran's Gilan Province 'Ali Akbar Tahaie and head of the customs office of Azerbaijan Republic on Tuesday [13 August] underlined the acceleration of a project for setting up common markets on both side of joint border.

Tahaie, while inspecting construction work on the border market in this northern Iranian city, called for establishment of a similar market in Astara city of Azerbaijan.

He added that the Iranian party was ready to construct a common market in Astara of Azerbaijan Republic. The Azeri official said that the Baku government has assigned a special representative for this purpose and that Azeri officials welcomed Iran's contribution to the implementation of the project.

Some dlrs. 300,000 has so far been spent on the border market.

Iran: Libyan Envoy Criticizes U.S. Legislation

*LD1308153696 Tehran IRNA in English
1300 GMT 13 Aug 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Aug. 13, IRNA — Libyan charge d'affaires to Tehran Mohammad Sharif al-Ghazali said here on Tuesday [13 August] the U.S. seeks political and economic goals by passing legislation calling for punitive measures against foreign companies doing business with Iran and Libya.

Speaking to IRNA, al-Ghazali said the aim of Bill Clinton in signing the D'Amato Law was to realize his election goals and to put pressure on Tehran and Tripoli to abandon their independent policies.

He said the U.S. follows the theory of "either for me or for none" in its bullying policy against Tehran and Tripoli.

Al-Ghazali said the U.S. sees itself being put aside in business with Tehran and Tripoli and so it is trying to harm the economic profits of European countries and other industrilized nations.

He said the new scheme of the U.S. is in fact an insult to the independent states and a blatant instance of interference in the internal affairs of other nations.

Referring to the resistance of the European states, Japan, Canada and Australia to the new U.S. legislation against Iran and Libya, he said these countries know that the U.S. is dictating its domestic legislations to other states which have great interests in Iran and Libya.

If the independent states of the world take heed of this bullying, a dangerous precedence would be made in international relations whose consequences would harm all nations, he said.

Iran: Petroleum Minister Describes Oil Deal With Kazakhstan

LD1408110696 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 14 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The agreement to transport Kazakhstan's oil to the world market via Iran will be implemented soon. The two countries recently signed the final agreement on oil cooperation and they will also sign the final appendix of this agreement in the near future. Petroleum Minister Gholam Reza Aqazadeh-Kho'i was interviewed by our correspondent on the special features of this agreement.

[Begin Aqazadeh-Kho'i recording] On the basis of this agreement we have declared our readiness to transport their oil production via the Persian Gulf. That is, about the month of Mehr [from 22 September] we will receive 40,000 barrels per day of Kazakhstan's oil through the port of Neka [in Caspian Sea]. This oil will be transported to the Tehran refinery via the existing lines [pipelines]. We will then deliver an equivalent amount of oil to Kazakhstan's trading partners in the Persian Gulf. Kazakhstan will pay us for the transit charges.

As I said, the agreement will start with 40,000 barrels per day and will increase to 120,000 barrels per day within the next couple of years.

Fortunately, in the wake of this agreement, some companies operating in the littoral states of the Persian Gulf have contacted us to make a number of proposals. Talks are in progress with these companies and we hope to be able to transport more oil from the Caspian Sea coasts to the Persian Gulf region via pipelines.

Another special feature of this agreement is that the Caspian Sea oil increases the importance of the Persian Gulf region and Iran's particular position in this sensitive regional crossroad for the transit of oil and gas is better recognized thanks to the agreements signed recently. [end recording]

Iran: Afghan Government Forces, Dostam Cease-Fire Called 'Step Forward'

LD1408221296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1953 GMT 14 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] After the establishment of the cease-fire on Tuesday [13 August] morning between the Afghan Government forces and the Northern National Movement, led by General Dostam, the process of setting up a national government in Afghanistan took a step forward.

The cease-fire, which is a sign of mutual goodwill, is considered a prelude to establishing an understanding between the Afghan Government and its biggest rival, and strengthening the talks between them, which began unofficially some time ago.

Political observers believe that an understanding between the Afghan Government and General Dostam has two essential outcomes for the Rabbani-Hekmatyar coalition government. The first is that it shows the Afghan prime minister's power in influencing his former allies in the Coordination Council, attracting them toward the government, and highlighting his political power to other opponents, particularly the Taleban group. The second outcome is that it is a demonstration of the reciprocal trust between the Afghan president and prime minister and their doubting opponents.

Iran: Syria's Middle East Policy Analyzed

NC1208111996 Tehran SALAM in Persian 4 Aug 96 p 12

[Commentary by M. Veysi: "Al-Asad: Playing Between 'War' and 'Compromise'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] King Husayn and Hafiz al-Asad, the heads of Jordan and Syria, met in Damascus today (Sunday).

King Husayn's visit to Syria and his meeting with Hafiz al-Asad came after almost two years of tension in the two countries' relations. This was the second meeting between the two since King Husayn signed the compromise agreement with the Zionist regime in 1994. The first meeting took place last month at the Arab summit in Cairo, where the two met for a few minutes after Husni Mubarak's mediation.

The meeting between King Husayn and al-Asad can be assessed within the framework of the various consultations among Arab officials since the extremist cabinet headed by Netanyahu came to power in occupied Palestine. Actually, had it not been for the announcement of Netanyahu's extremist policies, al-Asad and King Husayn would not have been able to ignore their profound differences of the past few years.

Amman-Damascus relations fell from the "cooperation" stage and started to deteriorate when the Syrian leadership described the signing of the compromise treaty between Jordan and the Zionist regime in 1994 as Amman's decision to walk a "separate path" and as a strong blow to Arab unity.

Nevertheless, fearing that more tension in Amman-Damascus relations would bring Jordan and the Zionist regime closer together and open up a new front against Syria, the Syrian regime avoided bringing its differences with Amman out into the open further and hid these differences among criticisms that did not name Jordan or refer to Jordanian officials. However, during the past few months—before the convening of the Arab summit—the two countries' press and radio-television propaganda against each other increased. High-ranking Jordanian officials stated a few days before the Arab summit in Cairo that the Syrian Government intended to send terrorist groups into Jordanian territory to create chaos and instability there.

It was clear that by bringing up such issues, the Jordanians intended to overshadow the main agenda of the Cairo session and to prevent the Arabs from adopting strong stands vis-a-vis Netanyahu's cabinet. And to strengthen these efforts Jordanian officials even tried to concoct stories of Iranian support for terrorism in order to please America and the Zionist regime as much as possible.

But why, despite all these disagreements and the Syrian officials' knowledge of the harm King Husayn was inflicting on Arab unity, did the Syrian leader agree to reconcile with King Husayn during the Cairo summit?

The truth is that this move by Hafiz al-Asad was the outcome of his assessment of all the developments in the Middle East during the past few months. On the one hand, the defeat of the Peres faction in the elections in occupied Palestine reduced international pressure on Damascus to sign a so-called peace treaty with the Zionist regime. Instead of international circles wanting Syria to respond to the so-called peace calls by the Zionist regime, it was Syria that was calling on the international circles to pressure Netanyahu's cabinet to accept the previous Zionist regime's commitments on the fundamental issues in the talks with the Arabs.

On the other hand, today Syria does not want to return to the situation of "war" and crisis with the Zionist regime. Many Middle East analysts believe that Syria's current policy is based on maneuvering between "peace" and "compromise" with the Zionist regime. And again, on the one hand, Hafiz al-Asad does not want to mar his political record with a blot such as the signing of a compromise treaty with the Zionist regime, while on the other hand he has come to believe that now that compromising Arab chiefs engulf his country, and given some other domestic and international considerations, there are many reasons to avoid war with the Zionist regime.

Under such conditions, how can Hafiz al-Asad maintain a balance in Syria's foreign policy?

It seems that under the current conditions, the Syrian leadership has placed three political steps at the top of the list of its policies toward the Zionist regime. These are: 1. Encouraging a more active role by international and non-American circles in Middle East equations; 2. Strengthening relations with Damascus' number one allies in the Middle East, such as Egypt and Iran; and 3. Efforts to attract compromising but disappointed Arabs such as 'Arafat and King Husayn who are worried about the policies of the new Zionist regime.

Encouraging non-American circles to participate further in Middle East equations has been one [illegible] the Syrian leadership's longtime wishes. And today an exceptional opportunity has arisen to accomplish this. America's unquestioned support for the Zionist regime at the various conferences and talks held on Middle East issues have encouraged the Syrian leadership to give the green light to America's rivals around the world for a more active presence in the Middle East and to thus express its dissatisfaction with America's stands.

Meanwhile, under the current conditions the Syrian leadership feels that Netanyahu's policies have caused difficulties for the Democrats ruling the White House because Netanyahu thinks only about the Zionists' interests while, despite its defense of Zionism and the Zionist regime, America—the Zionists' mentor—wants to protect its own interests in the Arab countries. As long as the Rabin-Peres faction in occupied Palestine pursued the Zionist regime's expansionist intentions and policies within the framework of apparently peace-seeking slogans, Washington hoped that the Arab countries would accept the compromise process one after the other and that this would lead to the creation of a political-economic union of the Zionists and Arabs under Washington's supervision in the Middle East. But it is clear that Netanyahu's victory has created problems for this policy because the compromising Arabs are pressurizing Washington to prevent Netanyahu from continuing his policies, while Netanyahu is not willing to abandon these policies.

This situation naturally limits America's room for maneuver on regional equations and gives the other big powers an opportunity to take a more active role in Middle East issues. The simultaneous visits to the region by French Foreign Minister Herve De Charette and the American Dennis Ross in the past month and De Charette's emphasis that Paris is serious in acquiring a more active role in regional affairs; the emphasis by French President Jacques Chirac on support for the principle of "land for peace" in the Arabs' talks with the Zionist regime; and the mediation by Schmidbauer, head of Germany's intelligence services, between the Hizballah in Lebanon and the Zionist regime for the exchange of prisoners of war are elements in the policy Syria expects of America's rivals. This is because al-Asad and his associates know that because of the presidential elections next fall, the Clinton Administration will never pressure the Zionists to help the Arabs and it is also unable overtly to defend Netanyahu's policies. Actually al-Asad intends to seize this opportunity that has risen in Clinton's foreign policy.

Meanwhile, al-Asad hopes that with the formation of an Iranian-Arabic front, his Middle East allies will be brought closer together in order to strengthen his policies vis-a- vis the Zionist regime. But with Husni Mubarak's rejection of Faruq al-Shar's proposal to hold a tripartite meeting of the foreign ministers of Egypt, Iran, and Syria, this part of the Syrian leadership's policies was obstructed by America's direct pressure on Mubarak. Nevertheless, Syria will continue to consider separate contacts and cooperation with Iran, Lebanon, and Egypt to be one of the keystones of its policy to put political pressure on the Zionist regime. Al-Asad's visit to Cairo in the next few days should be viewed within this context.

Attracting tactical cooperation by elements such as King Husayn and 'Arafat constitutes another part of the Syrian leadership's current policies. Al-Asad, who has always suspected that King Husayn and the Zionists held secret meetings during the past decades and is very well aware that King Husayn's policies are highly influenced by the Americans, will never seek a strategic alliance with Jordan—that is to say, to follow the same approach as he has with 'Arafat and the institutions under his control. But al-Asad hopes that the concern of 'Arafat and King Husayn over Netanyahu's policies will bring them back, on any level possible, into the Arab camp. He also wants to use this to strengthen his contention that "the Zionist regime is not prepared to accept its previous commitments". This is why, without forgetting the past, al-Asad welcomes 'Arafat and King Husayn to Damascus with open arms and, by setting aside personal feelings, puts Syria's interests first. In future talks we will discuss Jordan's place in the new equations in the Middle East.

Iran: Energy Minister Discusses Technical Cooperation With Syria

LD1308220196 Tehran IRNA in English 1743 GMT 13 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Aug 13, IRNA — Energy Minister Bizhan Namdar-Zanganeh and Syrian Minister of Economy and Foreign Trade Muhammad al-'Imadi conferred here Tuesday [13 August]. The topics on the agenda were expansion of Tehran-Damascus cooperation in the engineering field, purchase of electric equipment and technical services by the Iranian experts on the overhaul of transformators [as received] and powerplants. Zanganeh said that Iran was ready to cooperate with Syria in offering its technical and engineering knowhow to Syria in the fields of power industry, the training of efficient workforce, water conservation, and sewage and drainage system. The two sides also agreed on the exchange of delegations at the expert level in order to probe into the ways of expedting cooperation between the two countries.

Al-'Imadi is here heading a delegation to attend the joint session of Irano-Syria economic commission.

Iran: Turkish President's Call for Summit With Iran, Iraq, Syria Lauded

NC1508113196 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 12 Aug 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Four-Way Summit Is Welcome"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Turkish press reported yesterday that Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan is planning a four-way summit with the leaders of Iran, Syria and Iraq.

The move is welcome and the countries concerned should try their utmost to materialize the idea. The four-way summit will be in the interest of the participating countries for several reasons.

First of all the question of Iraq is a crucial issue having had its impact on the security of all regional countries since the Persian Gulf war in 1991. Without any doubt no country is entitled to interfere in the internal affairs of Iraq. However, since the U.S. has imposed special conditions on Iraq, the present situation demands that Iran, Syria and Turkey sit across the table with Iraq to find a working solution to the problem to put an end to uncertainty in the region.

Cross border incidents stem from lack of coordination among the neighboring countries. A quadrilateral meeting could definitely coordinate the efforts of all concerned countries to find a solution to this problem. The question of Kurdish separatism has been a serious problem in the region for years and has had its ramification for neighboring countries. Only a coordinated effort on the part of all concerned countries could find a working solution to this problem.

Under Premier Erbakan Turkey is no more a province of the united States of America. As Turkish politicians have reiterated over the past few days, Turkey does not take orders from the U.S. It is an independent country determined to strengthen its ties with the Islamic countries. Hence it is the Islamic duty of every Muslim country to reciprocate Turkey's move enabling it to strengthen ties among Muslim countries. Turkey's neighbors are the right ones to reciprocate its move in the first instance, specially, Iran and Syria.

The four-way meeting could also be the beginning of a move to form a broader front consisting all Muslim countries of the region. Muslims are indeed being threatened by the expansionist polices of the Zionist regime.

In sum the four-way meeting is not only in the interests of the participating countries, but it will be in the interests of all Muslim countries of the region.

Iran: Ayatollah Kashani Delivers Friday Prayers 16 Aug

LD1608121096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran Provincial Network in Persian 0800 GMT 16 Aug 96

[Excerpts from second sermon of Friday prayers by Ayatollah Mohammad Emami-Kashani, the spokesman of the Guardian Council, at Tehran University — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. [passage omitted] This week we had the visit of the Turkish Prime Minister to Iran. Just see for yourselves, the Turkey that was ruled by Kemal Ataturk who wanted to get rid of religion is now in a situation where the Turkish Parliament and the Turkish Government have an Islamic mentality. This shows that Islamic thought is so deeply embedded in religious and Islamic communities that despite all the plots and efforts of world arrogance in order to neutralize this school of thought [pauses] as witnessed, it failed to neutralize Islam in Turkey.

Today, when the Turkish Prime Minister Erbakan, comes to Iran, he talks about the fact that both countries are Islamic and that they should be united. This is an Islamic thought and this point was underlined from the first day by our late Imam Khomeyni, may he be admitted to God's paradise. [Passage omitted] World imperialism — America at this juncture did not want Turkey to have relations with Iran. But as you can see, this has endeared Iran to Turkey and Turkey to Iran. The thing that has brought the people of Turkey and the Islamic Republic together is this very same school of thought, this religion, because we are living under the banner of Islam. It does not matter what arrogance does — it brought Reza Khan to this country and Ataturk to that country — this ideology of our people has such roots. [in Arabic crowd chants in support: Death to America!]

We praise the people of Turkey and are grateful to the Turkish nation for their insight and for electing such a parliament and such a prime minister. All Islamic countries, the Arabs and non-Arabs, from every race and from closer or far away places, should join a united rank. Islam also said this at the beginning. They should unite and study the status of global arrogance. Frankly, see what has happened to the world today.

What a misfortune that in today's world the doctrine of Zionism and a group of Zionist people have turned to global arrogance. This fact has been written in various books for many years. The question: Is the United States controlled by Zionism and the usurping Israel or not? A foreign national, named Henry Ford, has written a book, which led to his trial by the Jews. In this book he shows evidence that from the start, when Christopher Columbus discovered America, this evil and malevolent race appeared in that land. However, he writes that in the past the U.S. Governments and presidents would not allow them [the Jews] to become too influential. He writes that some U.S. Governments had even passed laws banning the Zionists and the Jews from opening shops in public thoroughfares, where the public could see them. This law was particularly implemented in New York. But they gradually gained influence and dominated the banks in America, not just in New York but in other places.

Truly it is a misfortune for the world and it is a real calamity that in the 20th century — which is known as the century of civilization — the White House, that is the U.S. government has become like a slave following Israel and Zionism, whose brutality, crimes, bullying, wickedness, conspiracies, expansionism and oppression are clear to everyone. This is a real misfortune. [Shouts of approval and "Death to Israel"]

The Islamic Republic cannot compromise with Israel. As our great imam said repeatedly and as the great leader has said repeatedly: Our Islamic ideals, the depth of our beliefs will not allow us to compromise with Israel. And because we cannot compromise with Israel, they hatch various plots against us. They hassle us here and there, they put a bomb in some location and they do some thing else somewhere else; then they put all these together. They are such liars, they lie so much, they are slanderers with their media. They say that the Islamic Republic is terrorist despite the fact that being a terrorist is one of the specialities of Zionism and world arrogance. They do not realize that today, the world does not listen to their newspapers, TVs and radios. The world has realized that America is the servant of Israel and that America violates international law.

The Europeans realize this and that is why all the Europeans have taken an anti-U.S. stance. It was obvious that they would do so because there is a limit to even the aggression and nature of imperialism. [passage omitted]

We are disappointed over the reaction of some Islamic countries and certain spokesmen of certain governments and parliaments. Why do they say these things? And then world imperialism reflects this in its media and newspapers. How long should Islamic governments and peoples remain simple observers in this affair? Europe and European countries are doing better than some Islamic countries. They [Europeans] have all stood up to America, why aren't Islamic countries doing the same? Of course, some of them have given their opinions and opposed [America] and we thank them for their stance.

But this is an Israeli plot against the Islamic world and the world of Islam, primarily, should stand up against them. [Passage omitted]

Iran: Reyshahri Nominated for Presidential Elections

LD1608134196 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 11 Aug 96 p 2

[Unattributed report: "Reyshahri Nominated for Presidential Elections"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran — The Association for Defence of Values of Islamic Revolution (ADVIR) has reportedly decided to nominate Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohammad Reyshahri for the presidential election.

An informed source told KARO-KARGAR: "A number of the Qom seminary clerics and some of the political and executive personalities had suggested to him to accept the nomination...but Mr. Reyshahri refused to give any final answer".

It said some independent personalities as well as persons affiliated to various factions also asked him to accept the nomination.

"Considering that he has been an independent political figure and has a background of acquaintance and affinity with both major factions and the ADVIR list in the general election was moderate, he has drawn specific attention from many political and executive personalities". The newspaper said. The ADVIR is likely to announce its decision in a statement, it added.

Iran: Velayati Addresses Diplomats, States Right To Defend Islam

LD1508141196 Tehran IRNA in English 0950 GMT 15 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mashhad, Khorasan Prov. Aug 15 (Irna) — Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati said here Thursday [15 August] that the Islamic Republic of Iran is duty-bound to defend religious and political values in the framework of international norms and regulations both within its national boundaries and throughout the world of Islam.

Addressing the second gathering of iranian diplomats abroad held in this holy city, Velayati noted that Islamic Iran is the forerunner of the revival of religion in the world, therefore it has the right to defend muslims' legitimate rights.

Commenting on international developments in the past ten years, he stated that all developments throughout the globe are aimed at making countries closer to each other.

Referring to promotion of ties among different countries, the foreign minister said: "We should preserve our national interests in the face of international developments."

The performance of Iran's foreign policy during the previous year, developments in the world of Islam and in the Middle East region, the Islamic Republic's relations with western countries, the situation in the Persian Gulf, the critical situation in Afghanistan, and regional and international cooperation will be among the major topics to be discussed in the four-day Mashhad gathering of Iranian diplomats abroad.

Iran: Majles Speaker Stresses Unified Foreign Policy to Envoys

LD1408130896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 14 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri, the Majles speaker, today addressed a gathering of ambassadors, charges d'affaires, and heads of representative offices of the Islamic Republic of Iran based in the other countries of the world. He stressed the need for coordination on the implementation of a single foreign policy strategy and added: Whether it be in the political, economic, or other sectors, we must move on the basis of a defined strategy and policy so that our country's representatives in other countries can act with greater strength.

Nateq-Nuri described the movement of American blacks and their protests against that country's policies, the liberation struggles of the people of Palestine against the Zionist regime, and the justice-seeking bravery of the Muslim people of Bosnia-Herzegovina toward the criminal Serbs as arising from the influence of the Islamic revolution of Iran. He said: All of this is an indication of the fact that we have been able to attain a special position.

The Majles speaker described attention to trade and economic ties, as well as commercial exchanges, as major elements of the activities of the Foreign Ministry and our country's representative offices in other countries, and explained: Establishing a trade balance between developed and developing countries is one of our policies and it is necessary for representative offices to do even more regarding our country's economic and commercial exchanges with other countries and laying the required ground work.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Nateq-Nuri spoke of the preservation of peace and security in the world, safeguarding human rights, opposing terrorism, maintaining stability and security in the region — and ensuring that they are provided by the countries of the region — as well as having good neighborly relations and resolving disputes by peaceful means as some of the principles of the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, adding: We defend the rights of Muslims throughout the world, we emphasize the importance of Islamic unity and the expansion of ties with Islamic countries, and we believe in the revival of Islamic thinking in the world of Islam.

The head of the legislative branch also said: Heading all our principles and policies is the rejection of hegemony in all areas, and all the pressure that is put on us is due to the fact that we do not accept the system of hegemony imposed by the United States.

According to our correspondent's report, Velayati presented a report about the Foreign Ministry's activities regarding the annual holding of a seminar for ambassadors and charges d'affaires, and the main axes of the seminar's work.

Iran: Rafsanjani Visits Fars Province Armed Forces

96LA0342A Tehran RESALAT in Persian 5 May 96 pp 1, 2

[Provincial news reported by RESALAT]

[FBIS Translated Text] **The Iranian military resources will never be used in aggression against others, and the Islamic spirit of our Armed Forces guarantees this important matter.**

You Armed Forces are under the direct guidance of the religious guardian, Ayatollah Khamene'i, a just and alert religious jurist and a competent commander, and in such a situation, every step you take is in worshipping God.

Shiraz, RESALAT Correspondent—Yesterday in the joint morning ceremonies of the Military and Law Enforcement Forces of Fars Province, the president said: Eight years of sacred defense showed that arms dependence is a great threat for the country, and as a result of this experience, today, Islamic Iran compared to other developing countries has one of the largest military industries, with the efforts of Iranian experts.

Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani also emphasized: These military resources will never be used in aggression against others, and the Islamic spirit of our Armed Forces guarantees this important matter.

Addressing the Armed Forces of the country, the president said: The fact that throughout our Islamic homeland, despite having bloodthirsty and merciless enemies such as the United States and Israel, Iran has become a workshop of construction in utmost tranquillity and security is the result of the alert presence of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani called the guidance of the military by the religious guardian as a special privilege for the Armed Forces and said: You Armed Forces are under the direct guidance of the religious guardian, Ayatollah Khamene'i, a just and alert religious jurist and a competent commander, and in such a situation, every step that you take is in worshipping God.

He asked the Armed Forces to preserve their spirit of self-sacrifice and with coordination and brotherhood in the area of construction make more effort than ever before.

President Visits the Exhibition of Fars Industrial Capabilities

In the continuation of his trip to Fars province, Hojjat ol-Eslam Hashemi-Rafsanjani visited the exhibit of the gains of Fars industries at the Shiraz 'Afifabad Garden.

In the course of visiting the exhibition, the president emphasized the support of the government in providing for the needs of the industries sector in the country and said: Planning will be made for the quality growth of the Fars industrial units to benefit from research.

He emphasized the expansion of commercial and industrial relations between Fars and the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf region and added: To increase the commercial relations between Fars and the above-mentioned countries, export certificates will be granted to the industrial products of this province.

Connecting the Province of Kohkiluyeh and Boyer Ahmad to the Province of Yazd Through Eqlid

In a gathering of the people of Eqlid yesterday, the president said: The province of Kohkiluyeh and Boyer Ahmad will be connected to the province of Yazd through the city of Eqlid.

Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani, who was speaking in the Athletic Stadium of Eqlid, added: Creating connecting roads to these three provinces will rescue Eqlid from the present impasse.

He said: The connection of the natural gas pipeline to Eqlid, the operations of which will soon begin, will result in the growth of industries in this region.

The President at the Administrative Council of Fars Province

In continuing his visit to the province of Fars, the president attended a gathering of the people of Abadeh yesterday and, in the athletic center of this city, imparted the good news of the building of the Esfahan-Shiraz railroad through Abadeh.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Hashemi-Rafsanjani said: We will place the first foundation of this railroad on this visit.

Enumerating the economic potential and capabilities of the city of Abadeh, he recommended that the people make optimal use of water resources and pressurized irrigation methods.

The president said: With the use of optimal irrigation methods, the level of agricultural production in Abadeh will double, and a significant decrease in costs will be seen.

He also emphasized the construction of Marbar Dam, which has been a long-standing wish of the people of Abadeh, and said: With the completion of the studies to build this dam which are underway in the Ministry of Energy, its implemental operations will begin.

The president referred to the increases in the necessary funds to complete the implemental operation of Abadeh Airport and said: The construction of Abadeh Airport will soon be completed.

The president said: Cultural issues are at the top of the government agenda, and the loyalty of the people to Islamic beliefs as the main support for cultural actions will solve the problems and must be strengthened.

The Esfahan-Shiraz railroad project was ratified in the First Five-Year Plan.

Implemental Operations of the Izad Khast Dam in the Presence of the President

In the continuation of the president's visit to Fars province, on Saturday [4 May], the implemental operations for the construction of the Izad Khast Dam began.

This dam, which is earthen with a clay center, will be 36 meters high and will reserve 5 million cubic meters of water annually.

Also, the drinking water for the village of Izad Khast, located 65 km north of Abadeh, will be provided with the operation of this dam.

Also, in the presence of the president, the groundbreaking arena of the natural gas outreach operation to the city of Abadeh were held.

The implemental cost of this project is estimated at 35 billion rials [R], and the length of the line will be 188 km with the construction of an 80,000-cubic-meter station.

President Performs Ground Breaking for the Construction of the Shiraz-Esfahan Railroad

On Saturday evening, the president performed the ground breaking for the construction of the Shiraz-Esfahan railroad, which has long been a wish of the people of Fars.

The first phase of the railroad, which is scheduled to be built within seven or eight years, will be built with the special presidential funds and the Plan and Budget Organization.

The Shiraz-Esfahan railroad is one line, 300 km of which goes through the plains and another 150 km through the mountainous areas.

For the railroad, 19 bridges and 19 tunnels are projected.

Iran: Commander Says Ground Forces in 'Best' State of Preparedness

LD1308131796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 13 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The logistics commanders of the ground forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran began their seminar on 12 August.

According to the Central News Unit, Brigadier General Ahmad Dadbin, commander of the ground forces, described the logistics role of the ground forces and its importance. He said: This force is currently enjoying the best possible state of preparedness and is ready — under the wise leadership of the esteemed leader and commander in chief of the Armed Forces — to defend the realm of the guardianship of the supreme jurisconsult and the Islamic country of Iran. The seminar will last for four days.

Iran: Basiji Forces Set Up Training Camp To Demonstrate Power

LD1508181696 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 15 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In Mazandaran Province, 70,000 Basijis set up a training camp to demonstrate the power of Basiji forces in defending the Islamic ruling system.

[Unidentified correspondent] Seventy thousand Basiji and Revolution Guard forces took part in a combat training camp set up by the 25th Operational Karbala Brigade and thus showed their defense readiness and combat capabilities.

The camp, with a capacity for 75 battalions, is set up in 400 hectares in Juybar in Mazandaran. [passage omitted]

Iran: Reports on Iran's Development of Nuclear Energy Denounced

LD1308133596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 13 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The daily THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH, printed in London, in a report on Sunday 11 August, claimed that British customs confiscated an extra (?hard) amount of cargo used in the construction of missiles and atomic installations. Based on the THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH claim, it was scheduled that a 50 kg cargo of forged steel be sent to Iran.

The intentional claims of the Western media affiliated to the Zionist regime on Iran's efforts to reach nuclear weapons are not something new. Western media, by presenting baseless accusations, like Iran's support of terrorism, violation of human rights by Iran, and Iran's efforts to reach nuclear weapons, intend to harm Iran's (?aspect) in world public opinion.

The main leader of this propaganda is the Zionist regime. This is while the Zionist regime, having more than 200 nuclear warheads, is the only country producing nuclear weapons in the region, and less news is published on this regime's destructive activities. The Zionist regime, with U.S. support in the Security Council, has been able to ignore all the regulations related to nuclear non-proliferation and to abstain from signing the Nuclear Non- Proliferation Treaty.

The intentional character of Western media stems from the issue that, according to the testimony of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Islamic Republic of Iran respects all the technical and legal aspects related to nuclear non-proliferation. Basically, the Islamic Republic of Iran believes that nuclear weapons do not guarantee the security of any country. Therefore, this effort by different countries to equip themselves with nuclear weapons has no result but the creation of arms rivalries and tension in the countries' relations.

It is noteworthy that the Islamic Republic of Iran believes in the peaceful use of nuclear energy for the welfare and tranquillity of mankind, and Iran's efforts to reach nuclear energy are around the axis of the creation of electricity, which is required for the country's developing industry, and using this energy for medical and agricultural objectives. Therefore, propaganda ploys by the Western mass media cannot stop Iran in its path to use nuclear energy peacefully and it must be said that the Western media's claims on Iran's efforts to reach nuclear weapons have (?led) political motives and, after a while, when its psychological effects have vanished, it will lose its credibility and will become an old propagandistic issue even in the West.

Iran: Industrial Products Worth $750 Million Exported Last Year

LD1508140196 Tehran IRNA in English 1323 GMT 15 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Aug. 15, IRNA — The total value of the industrial exports reached dlrs. 750 million in the past year, up by 10 folds compared with the dlrs. 78 million worth of exports in the start of the first five-year development plan in 1989, an official at the Ministry of Industry Ravanbakhsh said here on Thursday [15 August].

Ravanbakhsh noted that during the said period, production of paper has amounted to 300,000 tons annually while it has been 210,000 tons in 1989.

On the growth in industrial output, he also said production capacity of tile has risen to 65 million square meters from 24 square meters and that of cheese rose up to 28,000 tons from 1,500 tons and fruit concentrate has enjoyed a growth to 53,000 tons from 4,000 tons, while baby food has reached 10,000 tons from 500 tons a year within the same period.

Ravanbakhsh noted that growth in value-added in industrial sector stood at six percent a year, investment is up by 5.2 percent a year; job opportunity rose up by four percent a year and the growth in export of industrial products has stood at 15 percent annually.

He said the second five-year development plan is drawn up on the basis of an annual six percent growth in productivity and that all output capacity in industrial sector would enjoy the same productivity growth.

He predicted that the expert work force would enjoy a 15 percent growth in the second development plan (1994-1999).

Iran: Chalus-Tehran Highway Studies Begin

96LA0321O Tehran RESALAT in Persian 24 Apr 96 p 15

[Provincial news reported by RESALAT]

[FBIS Translated Text] **Nowshahr, IRNA—Studies on the implementation of the construction of the Chalus-Tehran highway project began on Tuesday by the experts of the Ministry of Roads and Transport and the Development and Housing Division of the Foundation for the Oppressed and Self-Sacrificers.**

According to these experts, the preliminary studies for the construction of this road, which is 105 km long, were completed in 1373 [21 March 1994-20 March 1995].

The funds needed for the implemental operations of this four-lane highway are estimated at 1,300 billion rials.

Nepal & Bhutan

Nepal: Parliamentary Party Meetings Discuss Mechi Border Issue

BK1208061696 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU POST in English 11 Aug 96

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KATHMANDU, August 10 — The Mechi border issue drew the attention Saturday [10 August] in the parliamentary party meetings of all the three major political parties, Nepali Congress (NC), Nepal Communist Party (CPN-UML [United Marxist-Leninist]) and Rashtriya Prajatantra Party (RPP).

The Chief Whip of CPN-UML Devi Prasad Ojha said they have decided to continue their stance on the issue claiming Indian incursion of Nepalese land.

Ojha said the land being used by Nepalese in the area for years have now shifted to the other side which is a proof in itself about the incursion.

"If Nepalese land has been encroached upon by the other side, we will not rest until we take it back from them," he said. "From what we have seen so far we feel Nepal has lost land to India, but at the same time further study is needed before reaching any final conclusion."

In contrast to what the Nepalese government and the Indian Embassy's statement claims, the issue needs to be evaluated much more than what is done at present, he said.

The UML MPs also demanded further study and consideration of expert and technical aspects.

About the solution to the problem, he said the decision has to be made only after studying historic documents and maps.

The RPP meeting was also centralised on the border issue but stopped short of reaching a decision on the matter. The meeting is scheduled to continue on Sunday [11 August].

However, at the beginning of the meeting one member said the present government's decision and view are far from practice and the matter needs to be seriously reviewed by everyone.

The participants also expressed their objection on the recent statements made by NC President Girija Prasad Koirala on the Agriculture and other ministers belonging to RPP.

Even though the border issue was discussed at the NC meeting today, the absence of party president Koirala and vice-president Shailaja Acharya has indicated increase in the already existing difference in the party.

According to sources, NC parliament members expressed deep concern on the lack of communication and coordination between them and their colleagues in the cabinet and this would much effect the role of the party in the parliament resulting in decreasing confidence of the general public on the party.

Regarding the Mahakali Treaty, which is expected to be discussed in the parliament in next few days, Acharya has been reported to have a different view than the government claiming Nepal has been cheated.

The NC MPs present also questioned why the Finance Minister Dr. Ram Saran Mahat tendered his resignation just because the opposition members surrounded the speaker for a couple of days and what if they repeat the same behaviour and ask for the resignation of the prime minister.

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, who is the chief of the NC Parliament Party, assured the system would be improved and the relation between the MPs and cabinet members would be worked on.

He said former minister Mahat is 'clean' and his resignation would not effect the party.

Regarding the border issue, the prime minister said one team consisting of parliamentarians and experts will be making an on-site inspection of the area to clear the misunderstandings.

Nepal: Daily Views Indian Stand on CTBT

BK1508055396 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU POST in English 14 Aug 96

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] No international consensus India's refusal to go along with the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), supposedly on grounds of discrimination, comes as the proverbial nail in the coffin of international consensus. The United States, particularly concerned about India's refusal to sign the treaty and is even prepared to bypass India and go ahead with the treaty. China, though it has reservations about the treaty, is likely to go ahead and sign it. It is also unlikely that Pakistan, which had officially stated that it would sign only if India signed first, will comply.

All said and done, the CTBT sans India might actually not be as meaningless as it is made out to be. India might, therefore, be isolated on the issue in the long run. As far as Nepal is concerned, it is a signatory to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) and it is almost certain that Nepal will sign the CTBT as it is in its interest to do so. For by doing so, Nepal, which has no pretensions whatever that it will one day become a nuclear power, will be seeking to keep the region free of nuclear weapons and the terrible consequences of their use. This is significant, as not only India but also Pakistan, two born rivals in the region, are said to be capable of producing and detonating nuclear weapons. Such an eventuality will obviously spell the greatest tragedy for the people of the South Asian sub-continent. The main point is that the CTBT now under discussion in Geneva cannot really and truly proceed without Indian concurrence. This is because of the principles of consensus prevalent in such international gatherings. Yet there are indications that the Indian veto, if any, will be overridden. The lessons of Hiroshima and Nagasaki appear to have been forgotten. The use of weapons of mass destruction that kill so many must never be allowed. The fact that over two thousand nuclear tests have been carried out means that they have left an indelible mark in the earth's environment. Nobody really knows to what extent these tests, including underground ones, have destroyed the earth's ecology. In addition there are over 21 thousand nuclear weapons in the arsenals of the five nuclear powers. They need to be destroyed and there can be no compromise on this. Serious talks on total nuclear disarmament must begin immediately after the CTBT. Such a clause might be incorporated in CTBT, if possible. This should satisfy Indian reservations as well and enable it to go along with the rest of the world on CTBT. However, CTBT must be seen as the first step towards total nuclear disarmament. Test ban treaty can by no means be the end. Nuclear disarmament followed by gradual elimination of conventional weapons and reduction of armed forces must be the goal. India and all other countries on the nuclear threshold might consider this option and sign the CTBT. That appears to be the only course open to bring about an elusive global consensus.

Pakistan

Pakistan: U.S. State Department — 'No Change' in U.S. Kashmir Policy

BK1208054996 Islamabad THE NATION in English 11 Aug 96 pp 1, 13

[Report by Khalid Hasan: "Territory Not 'Atoot Ang' ['Integral Part'] of India"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] WASHINGTON — The United States has backed away from the impression created in recent weeks that by its endorsement of the Indian-sponsored State Assembly elections in Held Kashmir, it had acknowledged that Kashmir was no longer a disputed territory but an integral part of India.

A senior State Department official who, under accepted practice, is to remain nameless, said in answer to two written questions from THE NATION that there was no change in US policy on Kashmir and, further, that the US envoy in New Delhi, Ambassador Frank Wisner's remarks in Pakistan had been misinterpreted as they had been "taken out of context."

The official stressed that the United States continued to view the entire former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir as a "disputed territory" and believed that the dispute must be resolved between India and Pakistan while taking into account the wishes of the Kashmir people.

Ambassador Wisner's visit to Pakistan created both controversy and misunderstanding. His remarks at the Staff and Command College, Quetta, about "new realities" in Kashmir led to a wave of protest in Pakistan. While Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, who had initially seen nothing wrong with receiving the US envoy in India at his residence in Lahore and apparently held a pleasant meeting with him, later pulled back after the storm broke and called Wisner "the devil's advocate."

The most befitting reply came from Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto who declared at the Staff and Command College, Quetta, the same place where Wisner had earlier spoken, that the "reality" of Kashmir was that there were 600,000 soldiers of the Indian army deployed there against the people.

Although as was to be expected, the State Department on Friday [9 August] backed Wisner, the fact is that the envoy went beyond his stated brief and thus caused his government considerable embarrassment. His speeches and the cocky manner in which he conducted himself in Occupied Kashmir where the All Parties Hurriyat Conference refused to see him and later in Pakistan could only have given the impression that the American position on Kashmir had undergone a basic change. Wisner also caused offence in Pakistan by the viceregal manner in which he acted and spoke. "It is not for Ambassador Wisner or, anyone else to advise Pakistan to abandon its position on Kashmir, a position which every government that has been in office in this country since independence 49 years ago has adhered to scrupulously" a former Pakistani ambassador told this correspondent Friday.

The two questions submitted by THE NATION on Friday morning were:

1. "Is US endorsement of State Assembly elections in Indian-controlled Kashmir to be interpreted as acknowledgment that Kashmir is an integral part of the Indian Union?"

2. "Ambassador Frank Wisner's use of the phrase "new realities" vis-a-vis, the situation in Kashmir has placed a question mark over the precise US position on this issue.

Would you kindly state for the record what it now is: Did his visit have the full backing of the South Asia Bureau at State and were all his pronouncements cleared with the Bureau or was he exercising 'ambassadorial licence'?"

The State Department official answered the two questions in the following words, "We have not endorsed state assembly elections in Indian controlled Kashmir and that includes in effect Ambassador Wisner. What we said was that the elections could play an important part in a political process that is necessary to bring about a resolution of the Kashmir conflict or dispute. So that should certainly not be interpreted as an acknowledgment of Kashmir being an integral part of the Indian Union.

"Ambassador Wisner did not depart from our policy which remains the same: that Kashmir, is viewed by us the entire area of Kashmir, the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir as disputed territory and that the Kashmir dispute must be resolved between India and Pakistan in a manner that takes into account the wishes of the people of Kashmir.

"Ambassador Wisner most recently reiterated that during his visit to Kashmir this past Saturday [10 August]. The controversy about Ambassador Wisner's remarks in Pakistan has been a result of his remarks being taken out of context and he is not, as I said, departing from US policy and he always has the full backing of the South Asia Bureau and the Secretary of State."

Pakistan: Article Criticizes Wisner Statement on Kashmir

BK1308105296 Islamabad THE NATION in English 13 Aug 96 pp 1, 13

[Article by Azizuddin Ahmad: "Kashmir and US diplomacy"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Americans have been sending confusing messages on Kashmir recently. US Ambassador to India Wisner had outspokenly projected in Pakistan what was virtually the stance of the Indian government on Kashmir. State Department spokesmen who later tried to act as apologists for him further complicated the issue. Senator Hank Brown was most of the time tight-lipped in public. He was anyhow not inclined towards the Indian position.

Ambassador Wisner came to Pakistan to target those traditionally regarded as hawkish in their approach to the Kashmir question and the issue of relations with India. After a meeting with Wisner, Mian Nawaz Sharif came out convinced that relations with India were to be improved, that wars solved no problems and that if the major irritants between the two countries were removed, we might as well have a no-war pact with India. It was never too late to learn, one thought. In his address at the Command and Staff Collage in Quetta, Wisner made a detailed defence of the Indian position interlaced with a number of commonplace remarks. "Soldiers, better than anyone, know there are no solutions on battlefields — especially modern ones," he repeated a truism. He stressed the too well-known economic benefits emerging out of establishment of good relations between India and Pakistan for both countries and underlined the losses to them resulting from limitations on trade between the two countries. Stressing the need to expand trade, he observed: "Certainly such a move will encourage American and other foreign investors who are dismayed by the fact that, under current circumstances, any manufacturing plants they might establish in India or Pakistan would be unable to service neighbours." So far so good, but then came the catch, and I quote it in its totality lest I be blamed of taking a clause out of the context and misinterpreting it. "I would make one other observation regarding Kashmir," he said, "No effort to end the conflict in the state will succeed until all concerned acknowledge that, after nearly 50 years, there are certain fundamental realities that will not be changed. Acceptance of reality as it exists may provide a useful point of departure when serious discussion of the state's future begins, at the governmental level between India and-Pakistan, and in talks between the Indian government and, Kashmiri interlocutors and one day between the Kashmiris." In other words, he was supporting, without mincing words, the Indian position that its occupation of Held Kashmir will have to be accepted before any fruitful discussions with it could take place. The plain and unambiguous sentence quoted above can have no other meaning or interpretation. Wisner also lent support to the Indian government's ploy of the maximum autonomy to the state as a substitute for the right of self-determination and stressed that "elections that could now take place for a state government in Jammu and Kashmir represent an alternative to the conflict that has produced six (sic) years of suffering and impoverishment for the people of Kashmir."

Accepting what is called the reality on the ground, agreeing to the grant of maximum autonomy and extending support to the elections announced for September next are the three points that represent the present Indian policy on Kashmir.

The US State Department spokesmen have during the last few weeks been issuing explanatory statements that have made the confusion created by Wisner worse. Quoting State Department sources, a Washington-based correspondent of a Pakistan national daily (not The Nation) reported on August 6 that the "US Ambassador to India Frank Wisner had not departed from official US policy in his statements on Kashmir..." The same correspondent quoted another State Department source who said: "Wisner's view expressed at a meeting in Quetta at the military academy could have been misinterpreted but he might have been thinking about various possibilities in the present situation." The two statements say totally different things. Last Sunday [11 August], the Washington-based correspondent of the daily The Nation filed a totally different story. Quoting an unnamed senior State Department official, the correspondent said there was no change in the US policy on Kashmir and, what of course is total incorrect, that Ambassador Frank Wisner's remarks had been misinterpreted as they had been taken out of context. It was not only in Pakistan that many people accused Wisner of rehashing the official Indian policy aimed at perpetuating India's control on the Valley. The APHC leadership too felt Wisner was speaking the language of the Indian Foreign Office and canceled their meeting with him in Srinagar.

Senator Hank Brown was more discreet in his pronouncements than Wisner. Before his meetings with the APHC [All Party Hurriyat Conference] leaders and the Indian government officials in the Valley, a correspondent asked him to expound his views on the Kashmir issue. He declined saying: "I am here to know the situation in Kashmir, and will meet different people and then only I will comment." He was optimistic about the solution of the problem when he reached Islamabad but he did not tell how this would come about. Senator Hank Brown has met the Prime Minister, the COAS [Chief of Army Staff] and a number of government officials and has heard the views of the Pakistan government on the issue. He is also regarded as a friend of Pakistan. Let us hope when he returns home he tries to get the confusion about the US policy on Kashmir cleared up.

The US policies on Kashmir or for that matter any other issue in the world are dictated by its own national interest and not by any altruistic motives which is quite natural. One should not hope that the US would adhere to what one regards as high moral principles even when they do not suit it. It might take one stand on a certain issue and change it when it failed to produce the desired results. Pinning false hopes on Americans will not do.

What one can do in these circumstances is to be clear about one's own interests and the best policies to safeguard them. One should also be able to clearly identify what the US or other powers want but give priority to one's own nation goals all circumstances. The Pakistan Foreign Office had apparently failed to understand the mindset of Ambassador Wisner and gave his visit an importance that it did not deserve, unnecessarily providing him an opportunity to project his views before at least one prestigious institution. This was sending a wrong message all around. The false impression thus created by the Foreign Office had to be removed by the Prime Minister personally who while addressing the Staff College, Quetta, set the doubts to rest. The world is undergoing important changes today. A number of countries are increasingly rejecting dictation by the US opposed to their national interests. Even the traditional US allies are refusing to follow the American diktat. We may not unnecessarily provoke the US but we must under no circumstances offer red carpet treatment to any American itinerant that happens to be around and allow him forums to oppose our national policies.

Pakistan: Bid to Delete Kashmir, Palestine From UN Agenda Foiled

BK1608041296 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 16 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] At the United Nations, Pakistan has successfully thwarted an attempt to delete Kashmir and Palestine from the list of the matters pending before the Security Council. The Security Council recently circulated a note of its president, according to which, the council has decided that any matter which it had not considered in formal session during the preceding five years would be automatically deleted from its list of matters as of 15 September unless a member state notified its objection to the deletion. Pakistan was the first to register such an objection. The Security Council in its informal discussion on Wednesday [14 August] decided to review the decision to delete such issues after Pakistan conveyed its strong concern on the matter. Pakistan's permanent representative to the United Nations, Mr. Ahmad Kamal, in a letter to the Security Council's president had termed the earlier decision to delete the long-pending disputes as unprecedented. He pointed out that items on the list of matters of which the Security Council was seized should normally be taken off only when the issue was resolved or with the consent of all the concerned parties.

Pakistan: Main Kashmir Leaders Arrested in Delhi; Black Day Observed

BK1508141196 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 15 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] All the main leadership of All Parties Hurriyat Conference have been arrested in New Delhi. The leaders were staging a peaceful rally in the Indian capital today against the Indian atrocities in occupied Kashmir on the Indian Independence Day. A report by PTV special correspondent Ghulam Nabi Khayal from New Delhi:

[Begin Khayal recording] All the senior leaders of All Parties Hurriyat Conference, APHC, were arrested here in Delhi today at the Boat Club near the Indian president's official residence. The APHC took out a peaceful march led by its chairman Mir Waiz Omar Farooq; Syed Ali Gilani; Abdul Ghani Lone; Professor Abdul Ghani; and Yasin Malik; besides several other active workers of the conference. The protest march started from the historical India Gate. Protesters were carrying placards in their hands which read: Stop Genocide in Kashmir, We Want Freedom, Stop State Terrorism, and Kashmiris Want Their Right of Self-Determination. The march was stopped at the crossing leading toward the president's house. The APHC leaders then staged a sit-in demonstration, raising slogans which rent the air. A large number of people gathered at the spot to witness the peaceful demonstration staged against the atrocities being committed against people of Kashmir by the Indian authorities and forces. Police suddenly started dragging the leaders toward a police vehicle in which all of them were dumped and taken to some unknown police station. Mir Waiz Omar Farooq in a statement issued here today has strongly condemned the police action. He said the way the leaders were humiliated and taken into custody exposed tall claims of Indian democracy. [end recording]

Meanwhile, Indian Independence Day was observed as black day today which was marked by a strike paralyzing life in the occupied valley. The call was given by the APHC to demonstrate Kashmiris' indignation over the subjugation of their territory by India. Extraordinary measures were taken to prevent large-scale anti-India demonstrations. Thousands of troops were deployed on roads, bazaars and streets. Bakshi Stadium, the venue of the official celebrations on India's independence day, was completely sealed off and military was on guard around the stadium. In spite of such strict security measures, the official function lasted only for 15 minutes for the fear of mujahideen's attack. In the meantime, Indian troops martyred nine more innocent Kashmiris during siege and search operation.

Pakistan: Turkey's Erbakan on Ties With Muslim Countries, U.S., Iran

TA1408084296 Ankara TRT Television Network in Turkish 2100 GMT 13 Aug 96

[Mehmet Alkas video report from Islamabad]

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan held a news conference in Islamabad this evening. He said that a decision was made to increase the annual bilateral volume of trade with Pakistan, which currently stands at $200-300 million, to $1.5 billion. Pointing out that Turkish contractors are doing $700 million worth of business in Pakistan and cooperation will be bolstered with a view to further increasing this figure, Erbakan declared that agreement was also reached on undertaking joint investments with Pakistan.

The prime minister remarked that Turkey's exports will reach $400 (?million) as a result of the increase in the volume of trade with Islamic countries. This, in turn, will play a significant role in reducing the balance of payments deficit, Erbakan added. He noted that increasing exports is one of the most important issues facing the government.

Explaining that the historical Silk Road will be reconstructed, Erbakan said that the Trabzon and Iskenderun Ports will be reinforced to meet all the needs of Asia. The prime minister stated: Turkey will thus cease to be a one-sided country. It will become a multilateral country. While we develop our relations with the West and try to increase our exports to Europe by means of the Customs Union, on the one hand, we will bring about Turkey's multifaceted development by enhancing our cooperation with the Muslim countries, on the other hand. In short, we reached the same full consensus at the end of the talks conducted with the honorable president and prime minister of Pakistan today as we did regarding all the issues discussed in Iran.

In reply to a question, Erbakan announced that Turkey will work in cooperation with Iran with the aim of totally eradicating terrorism in the Middle East. According to Erbakan, the Iranian president said: Wherever you want, you can make whatever promise you wish on behalf of Iran. We will fulfill that promise. This is the kind of friendship we want.

Answering another question, Erbakan declared that oil will begin to flow through the Iraqi oil pipeline by 15 September, at the latest.

Asked to comment on the president's veto of the bill publicly known as the promotion law, Erbakan said: We have not had the opportunity to read the reasons for the veto. I would like to state, however, that this bill was enacted with the aim of guaranteeing a serious press. In no country in the world do serious newspapers distribute pots and pans in this manner. Turkey is a great country. Therefore, the parliament enacted such a law in order to guarantee this seriousness and to treat all the press equally. The president's reasons for the veto will be studied, and if the Assembly insists on legislating the same bill, then the law will be enacted again in a short time. The constitutional order is clear. The final decision belongs to the Assembly.

Erbakan disclosed that the gradual lifting of the state of emergency may also be raised during the extraordinary sessions of the Assembly and the relevant amendments may be introduced in connection with the state of emergency.

The prime minister stated that Turkey genuinely wants to be friends with the United States and to base this friendship on solid foundations. Erbakan recalled that the 12 conditions posited by the Assembly with regard to Poised Hammer have been conveyed to this country. We said to the United States: Let us discuss these points sincerely. What do you want from Poised Hammer? We agree to your wishes, but let us also eliminate our concerns and the aspects that render us uneasy. This is the nature of true friendship.

Commenting on press reports attributed to him regarding certain intelligence information, Erbakan denied that there is any truth in them and stressed that he did not make any such statement. He added: We would neither express lack of confidence in our intelligence, because it is our intelligence, nor artificially attribute ill intentions to those who sincerely say that they have no such intentions and that they are ready to prove anything we want, because a person is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Pakistan: Text of Pakistani-Afghan Communique

LD1508155996 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 14 Aug 96

["Text" of joint communique issued at the end of a visit to Islamabad by an Afghan delegation headed by Mohammad Yunus Qanuni, Afghan minister of internal affairs; issued in Islamabad on 12 August 1966]

[FBIS Translated Text] Afghanistan-Pakistan joint communique, Islamabad, 12 August 1996:

At the invitation of the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, a high-ranking Afghan delegation headed by Mohammad Yunus Qanuni, minister of internal affairs of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, paid an official and friendly visit to Islamabad from 10-12 August 1996.

At the talks, the Pakistani delegation was led by Mr. Jaffery, the prime minister's financial and economic adviser.

During its stay in Islamabad, the Afghan delegation met with President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari; Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto; Foreign Minister Sardar Aseff Ahmad Ali; and Interior Minister Nasirullah Khan Babar. Besides this, the deputy foreign ministers of the two countries held talks on regulating bilateral relations, especially with the aim of removing problems in bilateral relations. At the end of the visit the two sides agreed on the following points:

1. Both sides agreed to seek constructive ways of enhancing mutual trust and understanding.

2. Both sides agreed on the importance of establishing fully active diplomatic relations to facilitate the enhancement of relations on the basis of accepted international principles, i.e. noninterference in each other's internal affairs, and mutual respect for one another's territorial integrity, national sovereignty, and unity. To achieve this goal, the Pakistani side agreed to send a delegation to Kabul at the end of August to start making preparations for the reopening of the embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan there.

3. The Afghan side promised to send a delegation to Pakistan within a month to hold talks with the Pakistani side on issues related to the Transit and Trade Treaty of 1965. The Pakistani side further agreed to provide facilities for Afghanistan's trade with the People's Republic of China via the Karakorum highway.

4. Afghanistan and Pakistan pledged to end propaganda against each other at an official level.

5. The two sides have agreed to set up two working commissions, to begin work in the near future, for the realization of reciprocal objectives to strengthen political and economic cooperation.

6. Emphasizing the importance of Afghanistan's territory as a transit route for Pakistan's trade with the Central Asian market, the two sides agreed to give priority to the reconstruction and repair of Afghan highways for the realization of the gas-pipeline project between Turkmenistan and Pakistan, which goes through the territory of Afghanistan.

7. In a fraternal gesture to the people of Afghanistan, the Pakistani side gave assurances that it will spare no endeavor to strengthen the inter-Afghan dialogue, in order to secure the administrative and political unity, and the restoration of peace and security to, Afghanistan.

Pakistan believes and reiterates that any decision regarding the resolution of political issues, guaranteeing peace and stability, is a matter for the people of Afghanistan. Both sides expressed their continued support for the endeavors of the United Nations and efforts by the Organization of the Islamic Conference and regional countries, in order to achieve the above objective.

8. The two sides agreed to coordinate their positions concerning the issue of Afghanistan in the 51st session of the UN General Assembly and other international and regional gatherings. They agreed to ensure their continued contacts and exchange of views through relevant channels.

9. Reiterating their commitments concerning the struggle against terrorism and drugs, they reaffirmed their commitment to an active role in supporting international efforts in this field.

10. Mr. Najmuddin Shaikh, foreign secretary of Pakistan, has accepted an invitation from Abdorrahim Ghafurzai, deputy foreign minister of Afghanistan, to visit Kabul at the end of the current Christian month.

11. The head of the Afghan delegation invited His Excellency Nasirullah Babar, minister of internal affairs of Pakistan, to pay a friendly and official visit to Afghanistan at the head of a high ranking delegation from Pakistan.

Pakistan: Sharif Announces Next Phase of Opposition Movement

BK1408094296 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 14 Aug 96 pp 1, 9

[Report By Tariq Butt]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMABAD — The fifteen opposition parties Tuesday [13 August] announced the next phase of their "Pakistan Bachao Tehrik" (Save Pakistan Movement), including four protest processions-cum-rallies in the provincial capitals till September 3. Leader of the opposition Nawaz Sharif, who presided over the meeting of these parties here, unfolded the decisions and protest program at a news conference. Besides Nawaz, Ajmal Khattak, Maulana Abdus Sattar Niazi and Yousuf Magsi attended the conference while others were represented by their nominees.

Nawaz said four protest rallies-cum-processions will be organized in Peshawar on August 25, in Karachi on August 28, in Lahore on August 31 and in Quetta on September 3.

He threatened that if the government did not immediately resign, these parties would give a call for civil disobedience movement in which people would be asked not to pay taxes and utility bills. He did not specify time to resort to this extreme protest. Sharif said the opposition would take several other steps along with the civil disobedience. "We will not avoid taking any step, including collective resignations from assemblies to take our movement to its logical conclusion."

He said a government that has been dishonest with people's money, purchasing Surrey palace and indulging in extravagance cannot be legitimate and should not be paid taxes and utility bills. The meeting formed a three-member media committee, which will arrange conventions of lawyers, laborers, traders, transporters and religious leaders throughout the country. The meeting decided to setup offices of the tehrik [movement] in the center as well as in the provinces. Its central office will be housed in the PML-N [Pakistan Muslim League — Nawaz Group] Secretariat in Islamabad. Its Punjab office will be run from the PML-N secretariat in Lahore. The JI [Jamiat Islamic] office in Karachi will be used for the tehrik activities in Sindh. In the NWFP, [Northwest Frontier Province] the ANP [Awami National Party] office in Peshawar will serve as tehrik's secretariat and in Quetta, the tehrik office will be jointly run by Jamhoori Watan Party, PML-N and Awami National Party.

Answering a question, Sharif charged that the government has no respect for massive protests and strikes otherwise it would have resigned or sat down with the opposition for talks by now. He said President Farooq Leghari should know his constitutional role, adding that the opposition has repeatedly demanded of him to pack the government home.

The opposition parties' meeting, which continued for four hours at Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain's residence, also decided to make PML-N leader Raja Zafarul Haq convener of an action committee, which they formed in their first summit on July 24 this year. He was previously working as its secretary general. The committee presented its report about the protest movement, and would decide which party should host meeting and when.

To a question about the Independent Group's argument about the in-House change, Sharif said the opposition did not want mere change of government, but has presented a package and programme to change the system to take the nation out of the prevailing morass. "Every sphere of life is in the grip of a deep crisis. It is our responsibility to take the nation out of it."

He told a questioner that Raja Zafarul Haq, who was invited to the lunch hosted by the President for the visiting Turkish prime minister, could not attend because he was attending the opposition parties' meeting, which was more important. The meeting dubbed as illegitimate

American sanctions against Iran and Libya. It also expressed solidarity with protesting traders, clerks, laborers and salaried class, and condemned the government for failing to control lawlessness, starting extra-judicial killings again and operation in Dera Bugti.

Pakistan: Leaders Take 'Serious Notice' of Strike

BK1308021896 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 12 Aug 96 pp 1, 9

[Report by Raja Zulfikar and agencies]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMABAD: The business community Sunday [11 August] went ahead with its country-wide strike against heavy taxes on the second day but the shutdown remained partial in all major cities.

Reports arriving here from various parts of the country spoke of a general shut-down of big markets in all main cities. Small business doers, however remained engaged in trading activity.

The trading activities in Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad were not halted to the extent it was on Saturday [10 August]. Reports coming from Karachi say even some main markets were open on the second day of the two-day strike. Traders' response in Lahore was reportedly less than a day earlier. But in a new development which only one or two officials commented on, a serious notice was taken of the traders' strike at the highest level. "The prime minister has sought a report on the subject," an official said.

What the traders are now upto, hitherto remains unknown amid unconfirmed reports that they are planning to close business again on Tuesday [13 August]. A senior representative of the traders said Sunday evening "the next decision is to be made by the Anjuman-e-Tajiran [Trader's Association] Punjab whose members are meeting for an emergency session shortly."

No untoward event was reported anywhere except the arrest of Haji Maqsood in Lahore. Elsewhere, traders' shut-down remained completely peaceful. In Rawalpindi, the strike was near-complete as far as big markets were concerned. But small traders opened business after the noon and so did vendors. More small shops were seen opened as evening approached.

However, the capital city wore a busy look throughout the day as it saw a partial strike. Main shops in various Islamabad localities were either open since the morning or business started there in routine later in the day.

Traffic flow in the main cities remained slightly affected and in Rawalpindi and Islamabad also, it was thin.

In Rawalpindi, some traders did show disgust with the strike though they kept their shutters down for two consecutive days. They were more concerned with the losses being incurred than with showing support to the trader, unions or disapproving government policies related to levying of taxes.

NNI Adds: The president, Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (RCCI), Sheikh Muhammad Shabbir, called a meeting of prominent businessmen and RCCI members here Sunday to review the impact of the strike.

Shabbir said the unanimity of the traders on worse issues of their immediate concern included levy of the GST [General Sales Tax] and the unnecessary insistence of the tax collectors for submission of telephone and electricity bills along with form-A.

Shabbir congratulated the businessmen for organizing a successful strike to voice for their genuine demands and expressed full solidarity of the RCCI in getting them accepted at the highest level.

The RCCI chief suggested the government should cut its non-development expenditure and the extravagances in the wake of severe debt servicing and the high-rise inflation in order to put the country's economy on right track.

Peshawar Bureau Adds: Complete strike was observed by small traders on the second day of their protest on Sunday in the provincial metropolis.

All main commercial centers presented a deserted look. Although transporters were not on strike traffic was thin on the roads. President Anjuman-e-Tajran, Peshawar Cantonment [Cantt], Syed Aqil Shah, in a statement, said the unity shown by the traders in the last two days had proved that the whole nation was united against the government's wrong decisions. He said if their demands were not accepted they would decide their future strategy of not paying Sui gas and telephone bills in their next meeting.

Our Lahore correspondent Adds: Traders continued strike Sunday for the second day of the two-day strike call given by Punjab traders, though not with the same enthusiasm which was witnessed on the first day.

The shutters-down call, however, failed to exercise any impact on roadside restaurants, kiosks and roadside mechanics. There was a visible increase in the volume of transport as compared to the first day.

Meanwhile, PML-N [Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz], MPA [Member of Provincial Assembly] and president Anjuman-e-Tajran Lahore, Haji Maqsood Butt was tortured and arrested by the cantt Division Police Sunday from the premises of the Punjab Assembly.

According to an eyewitness, the police arrested Haji Maqsood from a picket near Al-Falah Plaza and, while dragging and kicking, got him in a police vehicle. However, the police denied having arrested Haji Maqsood from the assembly premises. A police officer said they arrested Haji Maqsood near the picket outside the assembly's premises. He said two cases under sections 3.17-H/2, 148/149, 506, 109 and 127 were registered against him with Civil Line and Qila Gojar Singh police stations.

The opposition, during the proceedings of the assembly, insisted that Haji Maqsood was arrested from the premises of the assembly and the arrest was illegal. Later, Deputy Speaker Manzoor Mohal gave a ruling, directing the SSP [Senior Superintendant of Police] to produce Haji Maqsood Butt in the Speaker's chamber within half an hour.

Haji Maqsood Butt, while talking to newsmen in the Punjab Assembly, where he was brought to be produced before the speaker, has alleged that he was arrested because he was successful in mobilizing the traders to observe strike against the imposition of taxes.

He said he was arrested when he went to hear the grievances of clerks who were protesting outside the Punjab Assembly. "I thought the police took me as a member of the protesting community and arrested me. But, despite showing my identity as MPA, SP [Superintendant of Police] Mubashar ordered his staff to throw me in the van and took me to the police station". He said, before he was taken to the South Cantt police station, he was handcuffed at Civil Lines police station.

He said the cases lodged against him, under the charges of creating unrest at public places and aerial firing, are baseless and initiated just to punish him.

He said Saturday he went to have a meeting with SP Mubashar, but he left the police station along with his other friends after feeling the aggressive attitude of the police staff.

Our correspondent from Quetta Adds: The, business community of the province continued their strike on Sunday, the second consecutive day.

The markets, business centers and bazaars remained closed throughout the day while the traffic and attendance in the offices remained thin.

The strike was also observed in Zhob, Sibi and Loralai.

APP Adds: The Federal Information Minister, Khalid Kharal Sunday called upon the opposition parties to come to the negotiating table to resolve issues, if any.

Speaking as chief guest at the oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected APP Employees Union in Islamabad, he invited the opposition "to enter into direct negotiations or discuss and thrash out the matters through parliamentary forums".

About opposition's strike call, Kharal said, "I have travelled 140 miles Saturday and I did not see any shutters down. The strike reports only appear in newspapers".

Pakistan: Modernization of Tax System Discussed

BK1208063396 Islamabad THE NATION in English 11 Aug 96 p 7

[Speech by V.A. Jaffery, special economic adviser to Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, at Management Association of Pakistan seminar on Federal budget, in Lahore on 30 July]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government had cautioned the country that a hard budget was an inescapable necessity. It is not therefore surprising that this caused so much controversy. Economic management by the previous government was weak and way ward. The fiscal deficit rose to over 8 percent of GDP, with little effort to control expenditure or mobilize resources. Money supply was not out of control expanding by nearly 30 percent in 1991-1992. The external account deficit widened to 7 percent of GDP. GDP growth plunged to as low as 2.3 percent.

At the root of this malaise lay a free-spending attitude, without the political courage to mobilize adequate tax resources. A supposedly urban-oriented and business-friendly government never took any steps to impose direct tax on agriculture and was even too afraid to make any pronouncements on it. The present government has begun the process of bringing agriculture under the purview of federal wealth taxation and the provincial income taxation. This is a major change in tax policy and a significant move to making the system equitable.

A crucial objective of our government has been, and continues to be, to bring the fiscal deficit down to a sustainable level. A substantial reduction has already been made, though the task has been difficult and the exact target has sometimes not been met. For 1996-97, our objective is to reduce the deficit to 4 percent, which is sustainable in the medium term.

Reduction of the fiscal deficit is a critical and a well-thought out objective. It is essential if we are to reduce public borrowing, slow down growth of indebtedness, moderate inflation, and keep our external account in balance.

Above all, a lower deficit ensures that the bulk of the credit is not pre-emptied by the Government, thus squeezing the private sector and constraining its ability to perform its most useful function-capital formation and investment.

We have successfully reduced government expenditures (excluding interest) as a proportion of GDP during the last three years. In particular, there has been a sharp decrease in non developmental expenditure (excluding interest payments) from 21.4 percent of GDP in 1991-92 to 17 percent in 1994-95.

A gradual reduction in internal outstanding debt-GDP ratio has taken place. It has declined from 45.3 percent of GDP in 1992-93 to 39.5 percent in 1995-96.

In the field of taxation, the government has taken bold steps to broadbase and modernize the tax system. As already stated the centuries old immunity from direct taxes, enjoyed by agriculture has been eroded. Exemptions have been drastically reduced. The General Sales Tax, which will improve documentation and widen the tax base has been extended. Modern systems of monitoring and control are being installed. As regards sales tax, it may be noted that previous governments were fully committed to the system but failed to make significant progress.

The tax package, though one of the largest attempted, is remarkable, for levying no additional burden on food items, which constitute nearly half the household budget of the common man. Unprocessed food has been kept virtually exempt both from import duties and sales tax. There is no additional burden on sugar and vegetable ghee which constitutes a significant item in the consumption budget. Some increase in prices is inevitable though clearly in some cases the increase in prices goes much beyond the tax imposed where the increase is speculative in nature, it should be moderated by interplay of demand and supply.

The well-to-do have not been spared, and this includes the owners of agricultural land. Excise duties have been imposed on beauty parlors and mobile telephones. The exemption enjoyed by corporate perquisites has been removed although the tax imposed is light and intended to provide more time for adjustment.

A common demand is that the tax base should be widened. The budget provides for a wide range of measures to improve documentation and offers incentives to those who join the tax network and penalties for those staying out. The scope of capital value tax has been expanded to cover purchase of flats and agricultural land. A differential rate of tax, rewarding tax-payers, has been introduced for purchase of cars and international airline tickets. The extension of the Sales Tax and withdrawal of exemptions will brine, about major changes in the practice of documentation. Incentives. through quick refunds, will be provided to manufacturers to join the Sales Tax network. This represents a major move towards a modern VAT system.

An important feature of the budget is a progressive change from fixed taxes to ad valorem taxation. This will ensure that Government revenues increase, as economic activity expands and revenues became responsive to growth, minimizing the need to revise taxes frequently.

The tax proposals, taken as a whole, represent a major structural change. They have reduced distortions, and provided a more level playing field for entrepreneurs. The tax base has been widened and incentives and penalties provided to encourage people to join the tax network. The tax system has been made more elastic. Conspicuous consumption will be discouraged. The wage goods particularly food have been protected.

The principal opposition to Sales Tax is not that the tax is a big burden but that it involves documentation, which would make tax evasion more difficult.

Overall monetary expansion has been brought down to about 13 percent during 1995-96. Private sector which was earlier crowded out has now greater access to bank credit. Sustained progress has been achieved in introducing market based instruments to regulate money supply.

As a result of these policies the three price indices — Consumer Price Index, Wholesales Price Index and Sensitive Price Index — all have shown marked deceleration during 1995-96 compared to 1994-95. They registered, in that order, an increase of 10.8 percent and 16.3 percent in 1994-95. We consider that while a tough budget leads to some cost-push inflation, in the short term, the reduced deficit will help, in the medium term to moderate inflation.

While striving for domestic stability, the liberalization of the external sector has been maintained. Most of the quantitative restrictions have been done away with while a major reduction in tariff had to be postponed for fiscal reasons, a number of tariff reforms have been introduced, to provide rationalization, discourage smuggling and substantive low tariff for machinery for the previous fiscally unsustainable exemption. An active exchange rate policy is being pursued. Confidence in the credit worthiness of the country is evident from the fact that the floating rate note issued in June 1996 was over-subscribed. The 5 years bond issued in 1994 is now selling at a premium. If the framework of stability has to be maintained to achieve sustainable growth and fast integration with the world economy there is no escape from the fiscal courage demonstrated in the budget for 1996-97. Foreign direct investment of $3 billion in three years and a 40 percent increase in large scale manufacturing investment in just one year indicate the positive sentiment of the market. Overall private investment increased by 21 percent in 1995-96. The new budget rationalizes the investment incentives by removing, exemptions and bringing down the duties on machinery. This will provide a fiscally sustainable base for future private investment. Previous contractual commitments in respect of power and petroleum and mining projects will be protected. This is also the basis of the resolve to bring the fiscal deficit further down to 4 percent.

The progress made in foreign and structural change in the economy is truly impressive. Deregulation and privatization have made great strides. A highly successful investment in thermal power policy has promoted private investment in thermal power generation, so that power shortages and loadshedding will soon be a thing of the past. The first of the units, in a power generation program aggregating over 4000 MW, has already came into operation. The first stage in privatization of WAPDA [Water and Power Development Authority] the sale of Kot Addu Power Complex has been successfully completed. The power policy was introduced to solve the immediate and urgent problem of loadshedding and has succeeded in this aim.

For the longer term, we are devising a new policy, which would provide for growth of private power on a fiscally sustainable basis.

When the present government assumed office the GDP growth was at its lowest ebb of 2.3 percent. The growth momentum has gradually increased and reached the level of 6.1 percent in 1995-96. The agricultural sector, which had recorded a decline of 5.3 percent in 1992-93, has grown on average by 6 percent during 1993-96. The cotton crop, which was in serious crisis, has recovered.

In 1996-97, higher productive capacity combined with cheaper industrial inputs will stimulate a higher rate of growth in industry, both large scale and in medium and small industrial sectors. The industrial growth rate is expected to improve in 1996-97 as a result of investments already made. The budget for 1996-97 also provides an incentive by reducing import duties on a wide range of industrial inputs, including iron and steel, plastic, chemicals and dyes and ores and minerals. Combined with good prospects for agriculture, the GDP in 1996-97 is expected to grow by 6.3 percent.

The annual plan for 1996-97 envisages a reduction in the trade deficit from $2.765 billion to $2.090 billion. The current account deficit will decrease from $3.7 billion to $3.2 billion. A 14 percent rate of growth in exports will be feasible with higher agricultural and industrial output, supported by a streamlined duty drawback system and an active exchange rate policy.

The budget for 1996-97 provides for a development program of Rs 105 billion. The allocation for social sector has been increased substantially in absolute terms and also as a percentage of GDP. The family planning program combined with primary health care has made excellent progress. The development programs includes substantial amount for drainage and agricultural infrastructure and power and communications.

As you can see the budget for 1996-97 bold and tough budget demanding changes in economic habits by spreading the tax net and requiring documentation. There is a coherent strategy of macro economic stability, structural reform and an economy wide open to productive investment domestic as well as foreign. Admittedly we have administered a bitter medicine, but we believe it to be necessary to cure the economy of its accumulated ills of debt and inflation, and to put on the road to a healthy growth.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Deputy Minister—Operation Against LTTE 'Will Continue'

BK1408120496 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 14 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The deputy minister of defense, General Anuruddha Ratwatte, has reiterated that Operation Sathjaya will continue in Kilinochchi till the area is liberated. The deputy minister was responding to an inquiry regarding a foreign media statement that the offensive had been called off. General Ratwatte said that there was nothing that he could do about such irresponsible reports in the foreign media. He said that the offensive against the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] was going on. Meanwhile, the LTTE is attempting to bring to the government's disrepute via a disinformation campaign. The Tigers have spread false stories that there are (?food) shortages in the Wanni to divert the attention of the international community.

Troops of Operation Sathjaya are still consolidating their positions in newly captured territory in the north. Troops retaliated with mortar bombs and artillery fire against positions of the terrorists yesterday in sporadic fighting killing two terrorists and three soldiers. The LTTE offered stiff resistance to a military advance against their (?large) stronghold in the town of Kilinochchi. Operation Sathjaya troops are consolidating their defenses in the newly captured area. No major incidents were reported yesterday. The operation is, however, continuing.

Meanwhile, the operational headquarters says that two police constables were killed in the Jaffna town yesterday. A group of terrorists fired at the policemen providing security to the CWE [Cooperative Wholesale Establishment] stores. Policemen retaliated forcing the terrorists to flee the area. In another incident at Kalmunai in the Amparai District a PLOTE [People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam] member was shot by terrorists. Later, he succumbed to his injuries on admission to the Batticaloa Hospital. Terrorists also fired at a group of home guards in the (Rideepokuna) in the Polonnaruwa District yesterday. The home guards are providing security to the farmers in the area. They retaliated repulsing the terrorist attack. One home guard was killed.

Sri Lanka: Tamil Tigers Bomb South Korean Project Office, Hijack Food

BK1508124296 Hong Kong AFP in English
1225 GMT 15 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Colombo, Aug 15 (AFP) — Tamil rebels seized a food convoy and bombed a South Korean telephone company office as Sri Lanka President Chandrika Kumaratunga returned home Thursday [15 August] after a state visit to Seoul, officials said.

Guerrillas of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) exploded grenades at the Korean Telecommunications International office in Trincomalee, 257 kilometres (150 miles) northeast of here but no one was hurt, officials said.

"The five Korean expatriates left for their office in Colombo after the incident," a local official in Trincomalee said by telephone. He said the Koreans were working on a telecommunications development project.

The future of the project was not immediately clear but just two days earlier President Kumaratunga had called for greater South Korean interest in the Sri Lankan economy during her four-day official visit which ended Wednesday [14 August].

On the eve of her return, a Tiger mine attack killed five soldiers and wounded 14 in the north while police commandos shot dead two teenage LTTE cadres in the eastern town of Kalmunai on Thursday, officials said.

Meanwhile, Tiger guerrillas hijacked 10 trucks that crossed a de facto frontier post in the northern town of Vavuniya on Monday [12 August], the first food convoy in nearly a month, international aid sources said.

"The Tigers have commandeered the first convoy that took wheat flour on Monday," an aid worker who did not want to be named said.

Hundreds of thousands of civilians in rebel-held areas continue to be fed by the Colombo government through regular supplies of food which are often escorted by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

The ICRC said they escorted Monday's convoy but could neither confirm nor deny that the food ended up with the Tigers. "We only ensure that the food goes through but we don't monitor distribution," ICRC spokesman Mark Weil said.

Another 38 trucks were due to go to rebel-held areas on Thursday, Weil said.

The LTTE and the military has been trading allegations of using civilians to pressure each other to make concessions by controlling the flow of food to the embattled northern regions where the government writ does not run.

A government spokesman said the LTTE had prevented the transport of essentials to hundreds of thousands of refugees in the past four weeks by blocking trucks in their areas but were allowing them from Monday.

"They are the people creating food shortages by not allowing lorries to come over to Vavuniya to take the food stocks back," the government spokesman said. "Tigers are using food as a weapon."

For its part, the LTTE said the army was responsible for the food shortages. "The military authorities have created a famine by blocking food and medicine for the Tamil people," the Tigers said.

Some 200,000 people in Kilinochchi were made homeless by the ongoing fighting in the area and the refugees were faced with serious shortages, officials said.

They accused the Tigers of blocking Tamil civilians entering Vavuniya where several camps had been set up to accommodate the refugees. Only about 300 families have been allowed by the Tigers to leave territory under their control.

There had been heavy fighting between the Tigers and government forces just north of Kilinochchi, where the rebels maintain their political headquarters after being driven out of the northern peninsula of Jaffna earlier this year.

The LTTE is leading a protracted campaign for a separate state and more than 50,000 people have been killed in bitter fighting in the past 23 years.

Sri Lanka: LTTE Report Blames Colombo for Temple Bombing

BK1608095296 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 13 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sri Lankan Parliament opposition leader Ranil Wickremasinghe has said that Sri Lankan troops have lost weapons worth 2.73 billion rupees to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] in Mullaitivu.

Disclosing this during the parliametary debate last week on extending the state of emergency, he said the LTTE had never captured such a huge quantity of arms before. He pointed out that the loss constituted 5 percent of Sri Lanka's defense expenditure for 1996. Through press censorship, the government has been shrouding the news about the Mullaitivu debacle and the loss of weapons. However, the opposition has embarrassed the Chandrika Kumaratunga government by issuing factual reports. The parliamentary discussions escaped press censorship and were given prominent coverage by most of the newspapers. Several English newspapers also published details about the lost weapons for the first time since the attack three weeks ago. They said that with these weapons alone, the LTTE can fight for more than three months.

Expressing his views, Ranil Wickremasinghe pointed out that this setback will be recorded in the annals of the military history of South Asia.

Meanwhile, Deputy Minister of Defense General Anuruddha Ratwatte has said that he could only conclude that 83 soldiers have been killed and 415 missing. He said investigations are under way and that until then this is the conclusion. Ratwatte's statement has greatly enraged the people, especially the parents of the dead soldiers, as approximately 1,500 soldiers have been killed so far. Ratwatte is reportedly making such statements to avoid paying huge compensations to the parents and relatives of those killed. A Colombo correspondent says such truths are concealed after reports that were more than 20,000 soldiers missing in the past. He added that as dead soldiers are included in the list of those missing in action, leaders are able to escape blame for the present crisis.

Forty people were injured in a bomb blast at the Mamanka Pillaiyar temple in Batticaloa the day before yesterday. The blast took place as a large number of devotees gathered for a temple festival. The blast destroyed the roof of a nearby shop and scattered shrapnel. There was no loss of life, though some civilians were badly injured. This violence is believed to be the handiwork of Sri Lankan troops.

Meanwhile, the Sri Lankan fascist government have blamed the LTTE for this, saying that they were taking revenge on the Tamil people. Of note is that the military fabricated a story that it recovered two bombs inside Nallur Kandaswamy temple last month planted by the LTTE to take revenge on the Tamils. These kinds of tricks are being played to show that the military is interested in the welfare of the Tamils and that the LTTE is against them. At the same time, it is feared that the Sri Lankan Government is hatching conspiracies to kill a large number of Tamils when they gather on such occasions and to blame the LTTE for it. An international news agency, which reported the Mamanka Pillaiyar temple incident, has said that it is meaningless to blame the LTTE for it.

The Sri Lankan Government which detained all the food convoys since 18 July has shown some flexibility in its inhumanity after pressure from various quarters. Ten trucks loaded with food transited through Vavuniya yesterday and 28 trucks today.

Thanks.

The Tigers' aspirations: motherland of Tamil Eelam!

Sri Lanka: LTTE Plot To Send Refugees to India Uncovered

BK1608114796 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 16 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sri Lanka's intelligence service has uncovered an LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] plan to force refugees into boats and send them across the Palk Strait to Rameswaram in South India. Their aim is to deceive the international community that the displaced civilians in Kilinochchi were without food and cause problems for the Government of India. Official sources told LANKAPUVATH that the facts were quite the contrary. The LTTE had plundered 40 truckloads of food sent by the government from Vavuniya and had not returned the vehicles. However, despite this the government this week dispatched 29 food trucks to be distributed among displaced civilians. The government has commenced sending food convoys to Kilinochchi to be distributed among an estimated 150,000 civilians who were forced to flee their homes by the terrorists.

The troops who captured the strategic town of Paranthan are now consolidating their positions 1 km north of the outskirts of Kilinochchi town.

Sri Lanka: Police Kill 2 LTTE Bombers Suspects in Kalmunai

BK1608040796 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 16 Aug 96

[Unattributed report — Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Two suspected Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] were shot dead by elite police commandos when they failed to stop at a security check point in Kalmunai, Eastern Province, Thursday [15 August] afternoon.

According to official reports the motor cycle ridden by the two Tiger youths was packed with high explosives.

It is believed that the youths, believed to be from the LTTE suicide squad, were trying to target Ministers A. H. M. Fowzie and M. H. M. Ashraff who were attending a meeting in Kalmunai. The meeting continued without any interruption. Three cyanide capsules were also recovered from the victims.

Efforts are being made to disrupt development work initiated by the government for the benefit of Tamil civilians, according to reports from Trincomalee, Eastern Province.

Bombs had been thrown at the Korean Telecommunications International Office at Inner Port Road at about 7.50 p.m. on Wednesday [14 August] night. Reports said some unidentified persons had entered the verandah and thrown two bombs. Nobody was injured but damage has been caused to the building.

LTTE cadres had also thrown bombs opposite a house occupied by a Korean at Oris Hill-McHeyzer Road about 8.10 p.m. on the same day. The windows and doors of the house had been severely damaged but nobody has been injured.

The LTTE which showed strong objections to the work on the telecommunication complex had given threatening calls to the Koreans when the project was started.

Meanwhile, food supplies sent to civilians by the government to the rebel-held areas are being grabbed by Tigers at Omanthai. An AFP report said the Tigers had hijacked a convoy of 10 trucks carrying essential supplies to Vavuniya. "The Tigers have commandeered the convoy, which left over the week-end," the report said.

It said the Tigers were holding up trucks in their areas and preventing the transport of essential food and medicine to the civilians. "They are creating food shortages by not allowing lorries to come over to Vavuniya to take the food stocks back," AFP said quoting a government spokesman.

According to authorities at Vavuniya 50 lorry loads of food are awaiting to proceed to Vanni. The lorries which have already left for Vanni are being held by the Tigers and they are not sending them back to Vavuniya for reloading. "There is no delay on the part of the authorities in sending goods to masses at Kilinochchi," the authorities said.

According to reports the number of civilians returning to Vavuniya after escaping from the Tigers is on the increase. Some of these returnees said the LTTE is forcing the civilians to flee to India by manipulating a scarcity of food. "They neither allow us to stay back at home nor come down to Vavuniya," one returnee said.

Government sources said the aim of the LTTE in forcing the civilians to flee to South India is to drag India into this issue.

"This is because the LTTE had realised the fact that it had been isolated by the international community for its barbaric acts of violence. The Tigers are now portraying a human picture by exposing the civilians since they feel that this is the only way to gain international sympathy on their side," a senior rehabilitation official said.

Meanwhile Health personnel have visited hundreds of families returning to Vavuniya from Kilinochchi. They are now housed at welfare centres in Vavuniya.

A team of officials headed by the Director General of Health Services Dr. Reggie Perera has taken series of measures to cater to the health needs of the people and a contingency plan has also been drawn to meet the needs of further anticipated displaced persons to Vavuniya from Kilinochchi.

According to this plan arrangements have been made to provide primary health care facilities to all 25 welfare centres set up by the government in Vavuniya to provide shelter to those who arrive from Vanni district. Further, necessary drugs and immunization facilities have also been provided.

Sri Lanka: Three LTTE Terrorists Arrested by Indian Coast Guard

BK1508114896 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 15 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Three LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] terrorists have been arrested by the Indian coast guard as they were trying to cross the Palk Strait. PTI reports said the Indian vessel chased the high-speed Tiger boat on Tuesday [13 August] night and seized it off the Indian city of Rameswaram. The terrorists reportedly dumped their weapons into the sea and surrendered. The Indian coast guard has intensified patrols in the Palk Strait fearing that the LTTE would infiltrate the country by mingling with Tamil refugees.

Troops of Operation Sathjaya continued to consolidate their defenses in newly captured territory yesterday. According to the operational headquarters of the Defense Ministry, one soldier was killed by an LTTE sniper. Another soldier was wounded in a confrontation with terrorists south of Paranthan. Troops retaliated with small arms and mortar fire. The operational headquarters also reported five soldiers were killed and 12 injured when their vehicle was caught up in a pressure mine explosion north of Pooneryn yesterday. The LTTE also kept up its attack on civilians. Terrorists killed a civilian attached to the STF [Special Task Force] detachment at (Kanchanpura), south of Akkaraipattu in the Amparai District. In the Batticaloa District, a hand grenade was thrown in the house of a civilian living near the residence of deputy posts and telecommunications minister, M.L.A.M. Hisbullah. While no injuries or damage were reported, the attacker has not been identified. A suspected LTTE woman cadre meanwhile committed suicide by swallowing a cyanide capsule when troops discovered a hand grenade in a house near (Opine) in Jaffna during a cordon and search operation.

Over 200 Tamils arrived in Vavuniya yesterday seeking refuge at government security centers in protest against LTTE attempts to forcibly retain them as human shields in the wake of the successful Operation Sathjaya. Our reporters who visited Vavuniya yesterday said that the Army and the police in Vavuniya have made arrangements for their security, while the government has made all arrangements for their food, shelter, and sanitation. The refugees said that due to LTTE activities they had lost their children, as well as their ancestral properties. The senior police officer in charge of the area said that there were 25 refugee camps in Vavuniya and they are expecting about 125,000 more refugees within the next few days.

Sri Lanka: Opposition, Amnesty International's Critique of PA Viewed

BK1608035196 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 16 Aug 96

[Editorial: "Amnesty's Amnesia" — Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] While many governments and prominent individuals are appreciative of what the PA government has done to reduce the bheeshanaya [terrorism] in the country there are two who do not agree. One is Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe. As the Leader of the Opposition Mr. Wickremesinghe who takes his role very seriously permits himself only to accentuate the negative. His attempts to make mountains out of molehills has fallen through on several occasions. But he will not give up, anxious as he is to become the incumbent of that empty hall in Janadhipathi Mawatha [President's House] which is a reasonable ambition for a young man in politics.

The other who does not agree is Amnesty International (AI). This non-governmental organisation (NGO) has its own problems to worry about, that is to justify its existence. It is nourished by the benevolence of good souls who wish to see a world free of horrors. It has to issue reports from time to time to inform its benefactors of the work it is doing. These reports have to catch the benefactors' eyes, so greater the alarm and despondency depicted in these reports, steadier the funds that come to keep this NGO going. That is the paradoxical relationship NGOs have with the evils of the world they are bent on eradicating.

This is clearly visible in the reports on Sri Lanka published by AI. The relief from terror, a majority of the people both in the North and the South of the country have experienced, is not recorded in the latest report. Even if it condescends to acknowledge as it does with a sentence like "There has been some progress with the introduction of a number of safeguards to prevent human rights violations...", it takes this away in the next line with "But the government is still refusing to amend provisions in several laws ..." What it is protesting against is the existence of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). Which democratic constitution in the world does not have laws to prevent it from being overthrown by its enemies?

There are even worse laws in the unwritten British constitution but Britain has no opportunity to use them because it has achieved a certain political stability, but nonetheless the PTA is activated now in Britain because of the terror that has resurfaced.

One would expect the AI to condemn, in its latest report, the senseless killings of innocents. Instead it defends with statements like this: "The LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] has argued that killing of Sinhalese civilians settled by the government in certain areas of the north and east can be justified because..." No reasons, however, can justify the killing of civilians.

The AI talks of killings and disappearances attributed to some Tamil groups involved in grappling with the LTTE, but blames the government for allowing them to "operate with impunity". Strange logic indeed! It is even odder that a body like the AI has not heard of places like

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 352
MERRIFIELD, VA.

This is a U.S. Government publication produced by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS). Its contents in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the U.S. Government.

FBIS collects, translates, disseminates, and analyzes foreign open-source information on behalf of the U.S. Government. Its publications may contain copyrighted material. ***Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.***

— Bracketed indicators before the first sentence of each item describe the way in which the material was processed by FBIS.

— Headlines and all bracketed explanatory notes are supplied by FBIS.

— Personal and place names are rendered in accordance with the decisions of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names as adapted by FBIS. Unverified names in radio and television material appear in parentheses and are spelled phonetically; words and phrases in parentheses preceded by a question mark are unclear in the original and deduced from context.

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

U.S. Government Customers

For a list of FBIS products, to subscribe to an FBIS publication, or to indicate a change of address contact:

FBIS
P.O. Box 2604
Washington, DC 20013-2604
Telephone: (202) 338-6735
FAX: (703) 733-6042

Non-Government Customers

Subscriptions are available from the National Technical Information Service:

NTIS
5285 Port Royal Road
Springfield, VA 22161
Telephone: (703) 487-4630
FAX: (703) 321-8547

New subscribers should expect a 30-day delay in receipt of the first issue.